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SCENES AND CHARACTERISTICS

OF

HINDOSTAN,

WITH

SKETCHES

OF

ANGLO-INDIAN SOCIETY.

88478

BY EMMA ROBERTS,

AUTHOR OF

Memoirs of the Rival Houses of York and Lancaster, Oriental Scenes, &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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"Many and excellent works have lately come under our notice illustrative of India, ancient and modern; but we do not know when our attention has been more forcibly attracted than by a series of sketches published by Miss Roberts in that excellent miscellany the *Asiatic Journal*. Light, animated, and graphic, they describe manners and people with spirit, and scenery with a tone of poetical feeling which alone can do justice to the magnificence of the Eastern World. We hope she will be induced to collect them in a volume, and a delightful one it will be."

Calcutta Literary Gazette.

INTRODUCTION.

THE popularity obtained both in England and in India by a series of papers appearing in the ASIATIC JOURNAL, has led to their republication in a separate form.

Our territories in the Eastern world, though long and unaccountably neglected by persons of enquiring minds, are beginning to excite a very considerable degree of interest and attention, and the author may therefore hope that a work will be generally acceptable which affords information upon the subject of Native and Anglo-Indian Society.

The contents of the following volumes, consisting of the author's recollections of scenes and incidents occurring during her travels in India, are necessarily of a very desultory nature, but as it would have been impossible, in recasting and remodelling the whole, to preserve the freshness of the first impression, it was thought advisable to limit the revision to a few trifling additions and curtailments.

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SCENES AND CHARACTERISTICS

OF

HINDOSTAN.

CHAP. I.

CALCUTTA.

THE approach to the City of Palaces from the river is exceedingly fine; the Hooghly at all periods of the year presents a broad surface of sparkling water, and as it winds through a richly wooded country, clothed with eternal verdure, and interspersed with stately buildings, the stranger feels that banishment may be endured amid scenes of so much picturesque beauty, attended by so many luxurious accompaniments. The usual landing-place, Champaul Ghaut, consists of a handsome stone esplanade, with a flight of broad steps leading to the water, which on the land side is entered through a sort of triumphal arch or gateway, supported upon pillars. Immediately in front of this edifice, a wide plain or *meidan* spreads over a spa-

cious area, intersected by very broad roads, and on two sides of this superb quadrangle a part of the city and the fashionable suburb of Chowringee extend themselves. The claims to architectural beauty of the City of Palaces have been questioned, and possibly there may be numberless faults to call forth the strictures of connoisseurs, but these are lost upon less erudite judges, who remain rapt in admiration at the magnificence of the *coup d'œil*. The houses for the most part are either entirely detached from each other, or connected only by long ranges of terraces, surmounted, like the flat roofs of the houses, with balustrades. The greater number of these mansions have pillared verandahs extending the whole way up, sometimes to the height of three stories, besides a large portico in front; and these clusters of columns, long colonnades, and lofty gateways, have a very imposing effect, especially when intermingled with forest trees and flowering shrubs. The material of the houses is what is termed *puckha*, brick coated with cement, resembling stone; and even those residences intended for families of very moderate income cover a large extent of ground, and afford architectural displays which would be vainly sought amid habitations belonging to the same class in England. These are

the characteristics of the fashionable part of Calcutta; but even here, it must be acknowledged, that a certain want of keeping and consistency, common to every thing relating to India, injures the effect of the scene. A mud hut, or rows of native hovels, constructed of mats, thatch, and bamboos, not superior to the rudest wigwam, often rest against the outer walls of palaces, while there are avenues opening from the principal streets, intersected in all directions by native bazaars, filled with unsightly articles of every description. Few of the houses, excepting those exclusively occupied by Europeans, are kept in good repair; the least neglect becomes immediately visible, and nothing can be more melancholy than the aspect of a building in India which has been suffered to fall into a dilapidated state. The cement drops from the walls in large patches, the bare brick-work is diversified by weather stains, in which lichens and the fungus tribe speedily appear; the iron hinges of the outer venetians rust and break, and these gigantic lattices fall down, or hang suspended in the air, creaking and groaning with every breeze: the court yards are allowed to accumulate litter, and there is an air of squalor spread over the whole establishment which disgusts the eye.

Formerly, strangers visiting Calcutta were dependent upon the hospitality of the residents, or were compelled to take large unfurnished houses, there being neither lodgings nor hotels for the reception of guests. But the capital of Bengal has become too large to admit of the continuance of old customs; boarding, and other houses of public entertainment have been opened, and conducted in so respectable a manner, that notwithstanding the great difficulty of subduing ancient prejudices, no person, however fastidious, can now scruple to become an inmate of them. The inconvenience of entering an empty house after a long voyage, is not so strongly felt as might be imagined by persons unacquainted with the customs of India; little is wanted besides the furniture which has been used for the cabin on board ship, and that little can be immediately supplied from the bazaars. A new arrival at Calcutta is instantaneously surrounded by persons who offer their services, both as domestics and purveyors, and it is always advisable to ask some resident friend or acquaintance to recommend proper people, as otherwise, there is no city in the world in which there would be greater danger of falling into the hands of cheats and robbers. Notwithstanding the long and strict intercourse which has taken place between

the Bengallees and the English, a very small proportion of the natives have acquired the language of their masters: nor is the accomplishment, with very few exceptions, deemed at all desirable, since those who possess it are generally found to have lost all the virtues of the Indian character, without gaining any thing in exchange. The circars, who may be styled agents, of all descriptions, are for the most part tolerably well acquainted with the English language; but these men are notorious for their knavery: they live by encouraging the extravagance of their employers, and the ruin of more than half of the Company's servants may be traced to the facilities thrown in their way by the supple circar, who, in his pretended zeal for "master," has obtained for him money on credit to any amount. Circars however are a necessary evil, and the present scarcity of money renders them less dangerous than heretofore; nor does the character of rogue apply to all. It would be unjust and ungrateful to withhold the praise honestly earned by many of these men, who have shewn the utmost gratitude and fidelity to employers from whom their gains have been exceedingly trifling, consisting merely of a small per-centage upon the articles supplied, and which no European purchaser could have obtained

at so low a rate. With the assistance of a circar, the household affairs are easily and speedily managed; but in too many cases the first impression has been unfavourable, and persons who are unwilling to sit down to the acquirement of Hindostanee, choose to fancy all natives alike, and prefer having people about them of more than doubtful character, with whom they can converse, to the employment of a better class, who have no acquaintance with any language save their own. It is scarcely possible to impress the mind of a stranger in Calcutta too strongly with the necessity of collecting respectable persons in every department of the domestic establishment. The comfort of the household, and the security of property, which must necessarily be exposed to the forbearance of these people, are dependant upon the good conduct of the servants, and no one in India will be well served who does not comply with the customs of the country, or who has not sufficient command of temper to submit to many things which will at first appear irksome and disagreeable.

The furniture of a Calcutta house, thc ɔgh scanty, is handsome. The floors are covered with fine matting, and the walls are adorned with sconces having glass shades to them, some containing two, and others three lights. The loftiness of the apart-

ments renders a strong illumination necessary, and as cocoa-nut oil is very cheap, all the houses have the advantage of being exceedingly well lighted. One of the most beautiful features of the city at night, consists of the bright floods issuing from innumerable lamps in the houses of the rich, when, all the windows being open, the radiance is thrown across the neighbouring roads. The punkah is another distinguishing ornament of a Calcutta mansion; it is formed of a wooden frame-work, a foot and a-half, or two feet broad, hung in the centre of the room and extending nearly its whole length. This frame is covered with painted canvas or fluted silk, finished round the edges with gilt mouldings. It is suspended from the ceiling by ropes covered with scarlet cloth, very tastefully disposed, and hangs within seven feet of the ground. A rope is fastened to the centre, and the whole apparatus waves to and fro, creating, if pulled vigorously, a strong current of air, and rendering the surrounding atmosphere endurable, when the heat would be much too great to be borne without it. The chairs and tables are usually of very fine wood, handsomely carved, and the sofas are for the most part covered with satin damask; but comfort and convenience being more studied than ap-

pearance, there are few of those elegant little trifles in the way of furniture, by which an upholsterer in London contrives to make a fortune. It is thought that the *bijouterie* so much in esteem in Europe would foster insects, and also tend to impede the free circulation of air; and perhaps this notion is carried rather too far, for to unaccustomed eyes, at least, the interior of the handsomest houses of Calcutta have rather a desolate aspect.

Chinese goods, though so highly esteemed in England, are of little account in a place where they may be easily obtained; and there are fewer screens, vases, or lanthorns, of the manufacture of the Celestial Empire, than might be expected from the quantities annually shipped from Canton to the Calcutta market. One peculiarity strikes a stranger immediately as he enters a house in India inhabited by Europeans: all the sofas, chairs, tables, &c. are placed at the distance of a foot at least from the wall; a very necessary precaution in a country abounding with insects and reptiles of all kinds. Every side of every apartment is pierced with doors, and the whole of the surrounding antichambers appear to be peopled with ghosts. Servants clad in flowing white garments glide about with noiseless feet in all directions; and it is very

long before people accustomed to solitude and privacy in their own apartments, can become reconciled to the multitude of domestics who think themselves privileged to roam all over the house. A protracted residence in India will render the most active European perfectly dependant upon his servants; we are taught by experience the impossibility of living without them, and surrender ourselves at last wholly to their direction; but meanwhile we are struck and rather scandalized by the strange position which they occupy. Notwithstanding the division of castes, and the extreme contempt with which the higher orders of domestics look down upon their more humble brethren; their refusal to eat or smoke with them, or to touch any thing that has been defiled by their hands; to outward appearance there seems to be a confusion of ranks which would not be tolerated in other places. None of the inferior domestics keep themselves, as in England, in the back-ground: the water-carrier alone confines his perambulations to the back staircases; all the others, down to the scullions, make their appearance in the state apartments, whenever they deem it expedient to do so; and in Bengal, where the lower orders of palanquin-bearers wear very little clothing, it is not very agreeable to a

female stranger to see them walk into drawing-rooms, and employ themselves in dusting books or other occupations of the like nature. It would be highly disrespectful in any of the upper servants to appear in the presence of their masters without their turbans, or any other garment usually worn, but these things are deemed quite superfluous by the inferior classes, and they never seem to think that they can shock any body by the scantiness of their drapery, or the incongruity of their appearance.

Those who are fortunate enough to arrive in Calcutta in the cold season, find little reason to complain of the climate; the days are bright and cool, and the noon-day sun, though still powerful, may be braved in any carriage. An invitation to the house of some resident friend secures the party from every inconvenience; but these invitations are not now very frequently given, and even during periods of more extensive hospitality, parties were often left to provide for themselves, letters of introduction not always meeting with the promptest or warmest attention. Under such circumstances, nothing could be more forlorn than the situation of a stranger. If belonging to either service, the Writers' Buildings, or Fort William, offered an immediate asylum; but the shelter afforded by the

latter, unless to persons well accustomed to campaigning, must appear of the most dreary and comfortless description. A couple of bare unfurnished rooms strewed with boxes and packages, and a crowd of natives offering themselves for service in bad Bengallee and worse English, the coolees or porters vociferating to each other, and all striving to increase the hubbub and confusion, must be styled a melancholy reception in a strange land. The hotels and boarding houses lately established afford much better accommodation, and nothing except the necessity for economy would now induce parties from England to repair at once into an empty lodging. Travellers from the provinces, accustomed to the modes and manners of Indian life, and carrying every thing absolutely essential to their comfort about with them, are easily and almost instantaneously settled; young men, unencumbered with families, do not object to inhabit their tents during the cold weather; and it is no uncommon circumstance for parties to remain at a ghaut in a budgerow for a week at a time.

The suburb of Chowringee, which has lately extended over an immense tract of country, is the favourite residence of the European community.

The houses are all separate, standing in the midst of gardens, sometimes divided from each other by very narrow avenues, though more frequently intersected by broad roads. No particular plan appears to have been followed in their erection, and the whole, excepting the range facing the great plain, Park-street, Free-school-street, and one or two others, present a sort of confused labyrinth which, however, is very far from displeasing to the eye; the number of trees, grass-plats, and flowering shrubs, occasioning a most agreeable diversity of objects. From the roofs of these houses a strange, rich, and varied scene discloses itself: the river covered with innumerable vessels,—Fort William, and Government House, standing majestically at opposite angles of the plain,—the city of Calcutta, with its innumerable towers, spires, and pinnacles in the distance,—and nearer at hand, swamps and patches of unreclaimed jungle, showing how very lately the ground in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital of Bengal was an uncultivated waste, left to the wild beasts of the forest. A drive along the Circular Road brings the visitor into more immediate contact with the morasses and wildernesses which surround the habitations of Europeans in the outskirts of the city. This part of Calcutta is

chiefly the residence of shopkeepers, clerks, &c., Britons and Indo-Britons, but particularly the latter; and, except as a mere matter of curiosity, it is seldom visited by the fashionable portion of the community. The European quarter of the city is extremely handsome, consisting of streets and squares, in which the greater portion of the houses are only united to each other by ranges of terraces built over the godowns (warehouses), stables, and servants' offices. The cathedral and the Scotch church are the two principal places of Protestant religious worship: the latter is the handsomer edifice of the two; but, strange to say, notwithstanding the preponderance of the sons and daughters of Caledonia in the European population of Calcutta, it is very thinly attended, while the cathedral is always full to overflowing.

The Black Town, as it is called, extends along the river to the north, and a more wretched-looking place can scarcely be imagined; dirty, crowded, ill-built, and abounding with beggars and bad smells. There is, however, a sort of debateable ground between the mud huts, the small dingy brick tenements, and the mean dilapidated bazaars of the middling and lower classes of natives, which is occupied by handsome houses enclosed in court-yards, belonging to

Armenian merchants, Parsees, and Bengallee gentlemen of great wealth and respectability. The avenues which lead to these mansions are exceedingly narrow, but the premises themselves are often very extensive, the principal apartments looking out upon pretty gardens, decorated with that profusion of flowers which renders every part of Calcutta so blooming. The drives and rides about the city are not very numerous, nor very extensive, excepting towards Barrackpore, for the whole of the surrounding country is still forest or lake; a large piece of water extends on one side to the Sunderbunds, and the city is often very sensibly affected by the malaria brought from that woody desert. It is not possible to proceed a single mile in any direction without being struck by the excess of rank vegetation, which the toils of the husbandman have not sufficed to keep down, giving to the whole scene an air of savageness which its luxuriance is unable to redeem.

The population of Calcutta and its environs is extremely great, and at every hour of the day the streets and the roads are filled with crowds of natives, chiefly dressed in white muslin, a costume which produces a singular effect upon a large multitude. The European and Christian inhabitants

bear but a small proportion to the Mahommedans and Hindoos, not amounting at the utmost to more than twenty thousand persons, amid a population of three hundred thousand. One circumstance attending the Christian community is very remarkable, although perhaps hitherto unnoticed in any description of Calcutta:—they are never seen on any occasion to congregate together; there does not seem to be any one point of union, any object of general attraction, which can bring the whole into even momentary association. No church is sufficiently large to contain all the Protestant members, and the remaining sects are scattered through the Roman Catholic and Armenian places of worship. The public drive, though well frequented, by no means comprehends the larger portion of Anglo-Indian and Indo-Briton residents; the theatre is seldom full, and would not contain a tenth part; and neither at the races nor any other spectacle do they all assemble at one and the same time. Such an outpouring as London frequently exhibits is never to be seen, and it is questionable whether, if Government House were to take fire, it would bring them

> "All abroad to gaze
> And wonder at the blaze."

A good deal of animation and activity is exhi-

bited about sunset; horses, carriages, palanquins, or vehicles of some description, are to be seen at the doors of all the houses, and the roads are traversed by equipages of various degrees of splendour; but with the exception of those which wind their way to the Strand, the favourite scene of an airing, they disperse, and as no one thinks of walking abroad, people who have no conveyances confine themselves to the gardens, terraces, and house-tops.

The public drive in Calcutta affords a gay and interesting spectacle, but is sadly deficient in the elegance which might be expected from the wealth and taste of those who frequent it. There would be no difficulty in finding, upon any hackney-coach stand in London, carriages quite equal in appearance to many of those which figure amid this motley assembly, and there is not one that will bear any comparison with the elaborately finished equipages of Hyde Park, where the servants, horses, footmen, harness, and every trapping are in keeping with the magnificence of the vehicle. The expedient is always considered in India, and when not carried to an outrageous excess, people deserve credit for sacrificing the pomps and vanities to the comforts of life; but there are displays upon the course of Calcutta which, to say the least of them,

are very indecorous. Gentlemen are rather too apt to adopt a favourite method of repose: when seated in their carriages, it is no uncommon sight to see the feet resting upon the door of the vehicle, an attitude much adopted by old and rich *Qui His*, and imitated by those who are desirous to shew their independence of every etiquette of civilized society. The dresses of the ladies have very little pretensions to splendour compared to the displays of the toilette in the capital of Europe. Many during the warm weather dispense with bonnets and wear their hair in the plainest manner: circumstances which, though rendered almost necessary by the climate, detract from the general effect. There is not so great a variety of Oriental costumes as might be expected: some of the Armenians appear in their national dress; a few Hindoo and Mahommedan gentlemen are to be seen clad in very picturesque attire; and a Chinese physician, in an old tumble-down chariot, personifies all the gravity and dignity of his nation.

CHAPTER II.

BENGAL BRIDALS AND BRIDAL CANDIDATES.

FEW opinions can be more erroneous than those which prevail in Europe upon the subject of Indian marriages. According to the popular idea, a young lady visiting the Honourable Company's territories, is destined to be sacrificed to some old, dingy, rich, bilious nawaub, or, as he is styled on this side of the Atlantic, "nabob," a class of persons unfortunately exceedingly rare. Ancient subjects devoted to the interests of the conclave in Leadenhall-street, belonging to both services, are doubtless to be found in India, some dingy, and some bilious, but very few rich; and, generally speaking, these elderly gentlemen have either taken to themselves wives in their younger days, or have become such confirmed bachelors, that neither flashing eyes, smiling lips, lilies, roses, dimples, &c. comprehending the whole catalogue of female fascinations, can make the slightest impression upon their flinty hearts. Happy may the fair expectant account herself, who has

the opportunity of choosing or refusing a *rara avis* of this nature,—some yellow civilian out of debt, or some battered brigadier, who saw service in the days of sacks and sieges, and who comes wooing in the olden style, preceded by trains of servants bearing presents of shawls and diamonds! Such prizes are scarce. The damsel, educated in the fallacious hope of seeing a rich antiquated suitor at her feet, laden with "barbaric pearl and gold," soon discovers to her horror that, if she should decide upon marrying at all, she will be absolutely compelled to make a love-match, and select the husband of her choice out of the half-dozen subalterns who may offer; fortunate may she esteem herself if there be one amongst them who can boast a staff-appointment, the adjutancy or quarter-mastership of his corps. Formerly, when the importations of European females were much smaller than at present, men grew grey in the service before they had an opportunity of meeting with a wife, there consequently was a supply of rich old gentlemen ready at every station to lay their wealth at the feet of the new arrival; and as we are told that "mammon wins its way where seraphs might despair," it may be supposed that younger and poorer suitors had no chance against these wealthy wooers. The

golden age has passed away in India; the silver fruitage of the rupee-tree has been plucked, and love, poverty-stricken, has nothing left to offer but his roses.

In the dearth of actual possessions, expectancies become of consequence; and now that old civilians are less attainable, young writers rank amongst the eligibles. A supply of these desirables, by no means adequate to the demand, is brought out to Calcutta every year, and upon the arrival of a young man who has been lucky enough to secure a civil appointment, he is immediately accommodated with a handsome suite of apartments in Tank-square, styled, *par distinction*, "the Buildings," and entered at the college, where he is condemned to the study of the Hindoostanee and Persian languages, until he can pass an examination which shall qualify him to become an assistant to a judge, collector, or other official belonging to the civil department. A few hours of the day are spent under the surveillance of a moonshee, or some more learned pundit, and the remainder are devoted to amusements. This is the dangerous period for young men bent upon making fortunes in India, and upon returning home. They are usually younger sons, disregarded in England on

account of the slenderness of their finances, or too juvenile to have attracted matrimonial speculations. Launched into the society of Calcutta, they enact the parts of the young dukes and heirs-apparent of a London circle; where there are daughters or sisters to dispose of. The "*great parti*" is caressed, fêted, dressed at, danced at, and flirted with, until perfectly bewildered; either falling desperately in love, or fancying himself so, he makes an offer, which is eagerly accepted by some young lady, too happy to escape the much-dreaded horrors of a half-batta station. The writers, of course, speedily acquire a due sense of their importance, and conduct themselves accordingly. Vainly do the gay uniforms strive to compete with their more sombre rivals; no dashing cavalry officer, feathered, and sashed, and epauletted, has a chance against the men privileged to wear a plain coat and a round hat; and in the evening drives in Calcutta, sparkling eyes will be turned away from the military equestrian, gracefully reining up his Arab steed to the carriage-window, to rest upon some awkward rider, who sits his horse like a sack, and, more attentive to his own comfort than to the elegance of his appearance, may, if it should be the rainy season, have thrust his white jean trowsers into jockey boots,

and introduced a black velvet waistcoat under his white calico jacket. Figures even more extraordinary are not rare; for, though the ladies follow European fashions as closely as circumstances will admit, few gentlemen, not compelled by general orders to attend strictly to the regulations of the service, are willing to sacrifice to the Graces. An Anglo-Indian dandy is generally a very grotesque personage; for where tailors have little sway, and individual taste is left to its own devices, the attire will be found to present strange incongruities.

When a matrimonial proposal has been accepted, the engagement of the parties is made known to the community at large by their appearance together in public. The gentleman drives the lady out in his buggy. This is conclusive; and should either prove fickle, and refuse to fulfil the contract, a breach of promise might be established in the Supreme Court, based upon the single fact, that the pair were actually seen in the same carriage, without a third person. The nuptials of a newly-arrived civilian, entrapped at his outset, are usually appointed to take place at some indefinite period, namely, when the bridegroom shall have got out of college. It is difficult to say whether the strength of his affection should be measured by

a speedy exit, or a protracted residence, for love may be supposed to interfere with study, and though excited to diligence by his matrimonial prospects, a mind distracted between rose-coloured billet-doux, and long rolls of vellum covered with puzzling characters in Arabic and Persian, will not easily master the difficulties of Oriental lore.

The allowances of a writer in the Buildings are not exceedingly splendid; writers do not, according to the notion adopted in England, step immediately into a salary of three or four thousand a year, though, very probably with the brilliant prospect before them which dazzled their eyes upon their embarkation, not yet sobered down to dull reality, they commence living at that rate. The bride-groom elect, consequently, is compelled to borrow one or two thousand rupees to equip himself with household goods necessary for the married state, and thus lays the foundation for an increasing debt, bearing an interest of twelve per cent. at the least. The bride, who would not find it quite so easy to borrow money, and whose relatives do not consider it necessary to be very magnificent upon these occasions, either contrives to make her outfit (the grand expense incurred in her behalf) serve the purpose, or should that have faded and grown old-fashioned,

purchases some scanty addition to her wardrobe. Thus the bridal paraphernalia, the bales of gold and silver muslins, the feathers, jewels, carved ivory, splendid brocades, exquisite embroidery, and all the rich products of the East, on which our imaginations luxuriate when we read of an Indian marriage, sinks down into a few yards of white sarsnet. There is always an immense concourse of wedding-guests present at the ceremony, but as invitations to accompany a bridal-party to the church are of very frequent occurrence, they do not make any extraordinary display of new dresses and decorations. Sometimes, the company separate at the church-door; at others, there is some sort of entertainment given by the relatives of the bride; but the whole business, compared with the pomp and circumstance attending weddings of persons of a certain rank in England, is flat, dull, and destitute of show.

The mode of living in India is exceedingly adverse to bridal tours. Unless the parties should procure the loan of some friend's country mansion, a few miles from Calcutta, they must proceed straight to their own residence; for there are no hotels, no watering places, and no post-horses:—circumstances which detract materially from the

éclat of a marriage. The poor bride, instead of enjoying a pleasant excursion, is obliged to remain shut up at home, and her first appearance in public creates very little sensation, probably from the absence of expectation on the score of new garments.

In up-country stations, marriages are even more common-place affairs, and the clerk of a country church would be absolutely scandalized at the neglect of the customary observances. Some writer upon India has remarked that the ladies are over-dressed. That must have been the case in the by-gone days of splendour, when they could afford to give *carte blanche* to milliners in London or at the presidencies: much to their credit be it spoken, in the wildest jungles, they endeavour to make an appearance suitable to their rank and circumstances; but this is very frequently a matter of great difficulty. Patterns are sometimes useless from the want of materials to make them up, and materials nearly so from the impossibility of procuring patterns.

Articles of British manufacture are exceedingly expensive, and often beyond the reach of narrow purses. The demand is not sufficiently great to induce a trader to keep a large assortment of goods, and he cannot afford to supply the few articles required by the small female community at

low prices. The Indian market is frequently overstocked, and valuable articles knocked down at sales for little or nothing: but they seldom come very cheaply into the hands of the consumer, the climate, unlike that of Kippletringan, eulogized by Dominie Sampson, is exceedingly injurious to wearing apparel, and much waste and destruction is effected by the want of care of native dealers, who do not understand the method of preserving European manufactures from dust and decay.

The contrast between the splendid dresses of a London ball-room, fresh in their first gloss, with the tarnished, faded, lustreless habiliments exhibited in Calcutta, is very striking to a stranger's eye; while, after a long residence in the upper provinces, the fair assemblages at the presidency appear to be decked in the utmost glory of sumptuous array. But although Indian weddings may be destitute of magnificence, they are generally productive of lasting happiness; they entail, comparatively speaking, little additional expense, and the small preparations which alone are considered essential, offer great facilities for early unions. A young man, depending as he must do, for all his enjoyments, upon domestic comfort, naturally feels anxious to secure a companion to enliven his other-

wise dull home; his resources out of doors are few; there may not be many houses in which he can lounge away his mornings in idle visits; the billiard-room does not suit all tastes, and however addicted he may be to field sports, during several hours of the day he must seek the shelter of a roof; his military duties occupy a very small portion of his time, and with little to interest, and nothing to divert him, he becomes anxiously desirous to taste the calm delights of wedded life. If he should be so fortunate as to be a successful wooer, the marriage speedily takes place.

There are few regimental messes established in native regiments; the officers inhabit separate bungalows, and if two happen to chum together, the intended Benedict turns his friend out to make way for his bride. If he should be rich enough, he may be seen at sales (for there is always some person quitting a station and selling off), purchasing looking-glasses, toilette-tables, and such unwonted luxuries in a bachelor's mansion. But they are not absolutely necessary, nor are they considered essential to connubial felicity; very frequently the whole of the preparations consist in the exit of the chum and his *petarrahs* (boxes which may be carried banghie, that is, suspended

at either end of a bamboo slung across a bearer's shoulder), and the entrance of the bride and her wardrobe, crammed to the special injury of the flounces and furbelows, into half a dozen square conical tin cases painted green.

The *trousseau* of the bride varies according to the means and appliances of the station, and of her own or relatives' purses. There are a set of men in India, very closely resembling the pedlars and duffers of Scotland and England, denominated *box-wallahs*, who enact the character of *marchand des modes*, both in Calcutta and in the upper provinces. The box-wallah himself is a well-dressed respectable personage, frequently very rich; his goods are conveyed in large tin chests upon the heads of coolies, and instead of making a tour of shopping, the lady, desirous to add to her wardrobe, sends for all the box-wallahs and examines the contents of their chests. The party thus formed presents a singular scene; nearly the whole are seated, the lady upon a chair, the merchants and their ragged attendants upon the floor; each vender pulls out his own goods, and offers them for sale, with numerous but not noisy commendations.

The spirit of rivalry assumes a very amiable aspect: all the principals speak a little English;

having to deal with new arrivals, young ladies who have made a very small progress in Hindoostanee, they find it to their advantage to acquire the means of bargaining with their fair customers. The prices of goods are regulated not so much by their intrinsic value, as by the stock in hand, and the demand. Ribbons, which are always called for, are never cheap; but rich silks and satins, blondes, gauzes, and the like, are often sold at very low prices.

Some attention to method is observed in the arrangements of the boxes: one contains a multifarious assortment of mercery and haberdashery, where we are often startled by the apparition of some obsolete manufacture, which, after having slumbered in an English warehouse during a quarter of a century, is sent out on a venture to India, under the idea that it may pass current in the upper provinces as a fashionable article. The poor deluded box-wallah is astonished and confounded at the contempt and horror which his Chamberry's, his Plowman's nets, and Picket muslins excite. In vain he endeavours to recommend them to notice; his English goes no farther than "I beg pardon, ma'am; very good thing—very handsome—no dear price—very rich lady—very poor man—you give what I ask." Frequently, during the course of the

bargaining, the servants interfere in behalf of their mistresses, and procure more advantageous terms.

Stationery, pen-knives, soap, lavender-water, tooth-brushes, hair-brushes, small looking-glasses, and minor articles of hardware, are deposited in another chest; these are taken out and displayed, until the whole floor is strewed with trumpery of various kinds, the sweepings of London shops, condemned to return to their boxes until, in some miserable time of scarcity, they are purchased for want of better things.

The bride makes her selection where there is probably little choice, and the dresses are handed over to the household tailor (the *dirzee* as he is called), who occupies a conspicuous place in the ante-room or verandah, seated upon a piece of white cloth, with his work spread out around him. Should there be occasion for despatch, assistants are hired by the day; and with these poor substitutes for milliners and dress-makers, the bride must perforce be content: probably a bonnet comes up with the license from Calcutta, but as the latter is conveyed by dawk (post), and the former must travel dawk-banghie, a less rapid mode of transportation, it is not unfrequently dispensed with. Female ingenuity is severely taxed upon these occa-

sions, and many and wearisome are the fittings on and the cuttings out, before the hat and pelisse can be made to resemble the pattern-figures in *La Belle Assemblée.*

The whole of the residents of the station, or, if it should be a large one, the greater part, are invited to witness the ceremony, and those ladies who consider white to be indispensable for a wedding, who think it proper to appear in full dress, and who are unable to obtain new vestments, exhibit to great disadvantage. A muslin gown is probably ironed out, and the betraying daylight not only reveals the spots and specks, which have been carefully ironed in, but also the discrepancies of the trimming, in which French white and pearl white, tolerably good matches by candle-light, disagree exceedingly in open day. No kind of etiquette is observed in the order of the celebration; the bridegroom, contrary to all established rule, is often seen to drive the bride in his buggy to church; the company, instead of being properly arranged, stand promiscuously round the altar; and the clerk, usually a soldier, is a person of no sort of authority.

The parties are frequently very juvenile—a young ensign and a still younger partner; but such

unions are not considered imprudent, for they are often the means of preventing extravagance, dissipation, and all their concomitant evils. Instances of domestic infelicity are comparatively rare in India: the value of a wife is known and appreciated, and, though there may be many bachelors from choice, the majority of Anglo-Indians are exceedingly anxious to obtain for themselves a security against the tedium and *ennui* of a solitary jungle,—a being interested in their welfare, and not only attached to them by the tenderest and most sacred of all ties, but who supplies the place of relatives whom they may never hope to see again.

The greatest drawback upon the chances of happiness in an Indian marriage, exists in the sort of compulsion sometimes used to effect the consent of a lady. Many young women in India may be considered almost homeless; their parents or friends have no means of providing for them except by a matrimonial establishment; they feel that they are burthens upon families who can ill afford to support them, and they do no not consider themselves at liberty to refuse an offer, although the person proposing may not be particularly agreeable to them. Mrs. Malaprop tells us, that it is safest to begin with a little aversion, and the truth of her

aphorism has been frequently exemplified in India; gratitude and esteem are admirable substitutes for love—they last much longer, and the affection, based upon such solid supports, is purer in its nature, and far more durable, than that which owes its existence to mere fancy. It is rarely that a wife leaves the protection of her husband, and in the instances that have occurred, it is generally observed that the lady has made a love-match.

But though marriages of convenience, in nine cases out of ten, turn out very happily, we are by no means prepared to dispute the propriety of freedom of choice on the part of the bride, and deem those daughters, sisters, and nieces most fortunate, who live in the bosoms of relatives not anxious to dispose of them to the first suitor who may apply. It is only under these happy circumstances that India can be considered a paradise to a single woman, where she can be truly free and unfettered, and where her existence may glide away in the enjoyment of a beloved home, until she shall be tempted to quit it by some object dearer far, than parents, friends, and all the world beside.

There cannot be a more wretched situation than that of a young woman who has been induced to follow the fortunes of a married sister, under the

delusive expectation that she will exchange the privations attached to limited means in England for the far-famed luxuries of the East. The husband is usually desirous to lessen the regret of his wife at quitting her home, by persuading an affectionate relative to accompany her, and does not calculate before-hand the expense and inconvenience which he has entailed upon himself by the additional burthen.

Soon after their arrival in India, the family, in all probability, have to travel to an up-country station,—and here the poor girl's troubles begin: she is thrust into an outer cabin in a budgerow, or into an inner room in a tent; she makes perhaps a third in a buggy, and finds herself always in the way; she discovers that she is a source of continual expense; that an additional person in a family imposes the necessity of keeping several additional servants, and where there is not a close carriage she must remain a prisoner. She cannot walk out beyond the garden or the verandah, and all the out-of-door recreations, in which she may have been accustomed to indulge in at home, are denied her.

Tending flowers, that truly feminine employment, is an utter impossibility; the garden may be full of plants (which she has only seen in their exotic state) in all the abundance and beauty of native

luxuriance, but except before the sun has risen, or after it has set, they are not to be approached; and even then, the frame is too completely enervated by the climate to admit of those little pleasing labours, which render the green-house and the parterre so interesting. She may be condemned to a long melancholy sojourn at some out-station, offering little society, and none to her taste.

If she should be musical, so much the worse; the hot winds have split her piano and her guitar, or the former is in a wretched condition, and there is nobody to tune it; the white ants have demolished her music-books, and new ones are not to be had. Drawing offers a better resource, but it is often suspended from want of materials; and needle-work is not suited to the climate. Her brother and sister are domestic, and do not sympathize in her *ennui*; they either see little company, or invite guests merely with a view to be quit of an incumbrance.

If the few young men who may be at the station should not entertain matrimonial views, they will be shy of their attention to a single woman, lest expectations should be formed which they are not inclined to fulfil. It is dangerous to hand a disengaged lady too often to table, for though no conversation may take place between the parties, the

gentleman's silence is attributed to want of courage to speak, and the offer, if not forthcoming, is inferred. A determined flirt may certainly succeed in drawing a train of admirers around her; but such exhibitions are not common, and where ladies are exceedingly scarce, they are sometimes subject to very extraordinary instances of neglect. These are sufficiently frequent to be designated by a peculiar phrase; the wife or sister who may be obliged to accept a relative's arm, or walk alone, is said to be "wrecked," and perhaps an undue degree of apprehension is entertained upon the subject; a mark of rudeness of this nature reflecting more discredit upon the persons who can be guilty of it, than upon those subjected to the affront. Few young women, who have accompanied their married sisters to India, possess the means of returning home; however strong their dislike may be to the country, their lot is cast in it, and they must remain in a state of miserable dependence, with the danger of being left unprovided for before them, until they shall be rescued from this distressing situation by an offer of marriage.

The tie between husband and wife is the only one from which Anglo-Indians can hope to derive solid happiness; that between parents and children

is subject to many shocks. The difficulty, amounting almost to impossibility, of educating young people in India, occasions early separation, which, in too many instances, proves fatal to the enjoyments of a re-union. After a long absence, parents and children meet as strangers: the latter, probably consigned to some large school, have not been brought up with any very exalted ideas upon the subject of filial duty. They are keen and quick observers of the faults and follies of those whom they have not been early accustomed to regard with respect; and the former are apt to exact too much submission. Both parties are disappointed, the younger having hoped to meet with unlimited indulgence, while the elder flatter themselves with erroneous expectations of obedience.

Accomplished girls, fresh from England, are unprepared for the modes and habits of Indian life; the charm of novelty does not always reconcile them to things strange, and often uncouth; while mothers, to whom all around is familiar, are astonished and displeased to find that the young ladies do not readily fall into their ways, and are more prone to dictate than to obey. Where these differences of opinion do not create strife and contention, they are productive of coldness; each person feels deeply

aggrieved by the conduct of others towards them; those who possess amiable dispositions, make allowances for circumstances and situation, but seldom do we see the attached and happy families which afford such beautiful pictures of domestic felicity in England.

That death and absence differ but in name, all who have been long separated from those whom they love best in the world must readily allow. Experience in India shews that even a mother's affection, perchance the strongest and most lasting sentiment, is not proof against it, or how can we account for the exceeding, and, it may be added, disgusting anxiety, continually manifested to get rid of daughters as rapidly as they are brought out?

It is no unusual thing for persons who have accumulated a fortune, and who are desirous to spend the remainder of their days in luxury in England, to marry off the females of their family as fast as they possibly can, little caring to whom they are consigned, and leaving them to combat with every sort of hardship, without a hope of their ever meeting again. The condition of girls thus situated is far from enviable; overtures are made to their parents, and accepted by them without consulting the parties who are the most deeply

concerned in the transaction; the young lady is simply told that a proposal has been made in which she must acquiesce, and she goes to the altar, if not unwilling, at least indifferent. Many are so strongly impressed with the comfortless nature of their situation, that they gladly avail themselves of the first opportunity to effect a change, and nothing more disagreeable can readily be imagined than the condition of the last of four or five sisters, who by some inexplicable fatality remains single. She is frequently bandied about from one family to another, seeking rest and finding none. Whether she may have matrimonial views, or if perfectly guiltless of all design, it is the same thing, she is supposed to be manœuvring for a husband, and those whom she may fascinate do not always possess the moral courage requisite to acknowledge a partiality for a girl, who has failed to secure early offers, or the reputation of having refused them. At length, when her pretensions have almost become a jest, some candidate for her hand appears, and is of course successful; it is then discovered that she is a very fine young woman, and all agree that her protracted state of spinsterhood must have been a matter of choice.

It is an amusing thing for a spectator to observe

the straight-forward, business-like manner in which marriages in India are brought about. The opinion entertained by the princess Huncamunca, respecting the expediency of short courtships, seems to prevail. A gentleman, desirous to enter the holy pale, does not always wait until he shall meet with some fair one suiting his peculiar taste, but the instant that he hears of an expected arrival, despatches a proposal to meet her upon the road; this is either rejected *in toto*, or accepted conditionally; and if there should be nothing very objectionable in the suitor, the marriage takes place. Others travel over to some distant station, in the hope of returning with a wife; and many visit the presidency on the same errand. Numbers return without achieving their object, and these unfortunates are said to be members of the "*juwaub* club," a favourite Indian phrase, which is exceedingly expressive of the forlorn state of bachelors upon compulsion.

Young men who are qualifying themselves for interpreterships, or who expect staff-appointments, are often supposed to be quite guiltless of matrimonial designs; they may be attached to a large station without even entering into any of the gaities,—are not seen at balls, plays, or races, and

do not frequent the morning levées of ladies of distinction. Suddenly, upon obtaining the promised post, they appear at a ball, and some girl, who has been a leading *belle*, and who has flirted with half the station, is quietly approached. She, with more sense than sentiment, disengages herself from her butterfly-admirers, on whom the astounding fact of her approaching marriage acts like an electric shock; they look very foolishly at each other, and make a faint attempt to laugh.

The spinsterhood of India is composed of three different classes; the first consists of the daughters of civil and military servants, merchants, and others settled in India, who have been sent to England for education, and who generally return between the ages of sixteen and twenty; these may be said to belong to the country, and to possess homes, although upon the expectation of the arrival of a second or third daughter, they are often disposed of after a very summary fashion. In the second are to be found the sisters and near relatives of those brides who have married Indian officers, &c. during the period of a visit to the mother-country, and who, either through affection for their relatives, or in consequence of having no provision in England, have been induced to accompany them to

the Eastern world. The third is formed of the orphan daughters, legitimate and illegitimate, of Indian residents, who have been educated at the presidencies. This latter class is exceedingly numerous, and as they are frequently destitute of family connexions, those who are not so fortunate as to possess relatives in a certain rank in life, see very little of society, and have comparatively little chance of being well-established. The progress of refinement has materially altered the condition of these young ladies, but has acted in a manner the very reverse of improvement, as far as their individual interests are concerned.

A considerable number, having no support excepting that which is derived from the Orphan Fund, reside at a large house at Kidderpore, about a mile and a-half from Calcutta, belonging to that institution; others who may be endowed with the interest of a few thousand rupees, become parlour-boarders at schools of various degrees of respectability, where they await the chance of attracting some young officer, the military being objects of consideration when civilians are unattainable.

Formerly it was the practice to give balls at the establishment at Kidderpore, to which vast numbers of beaux were invited; but this un-

disguised method of seeking husbands is now at variance with the received notions of propriety, and the Female Orphan School has assumed, in consequence of the discontinuance of these parties, somewhat of the character of a nunnery. In fact, the young ladies immured within the walls have no chance of meeting with suitors, unless they should possess friends in Calcutta to give them occasional invitations, or the fame of their beauty should spread itself abroad. Every year, by increasing the number of arrivals educated in England, lessens their chance of meeting with eligible matches.

The prejudices against "dark beauties" (the phrase usually employed to designate those who are the inheritors of the native complexion) are daily gaining ground, and in the present state of female intellectuality, their uncultivated minds form a decided objection. The English language has degenerated in the possession of the "country-born;" their pronunciation is short and disagreeable, and they usually place the accent on the wrong syllable: though not so completely barbarized as in America, the mother, or rather father-tongue, has lost all its strength and beauty, and acquired a peculiar idiom.

There are not many heiresses to be found in India, and those who are gifted with property of any kind,

almost invariably belong to the dark population, the daughters or grand-daughters of the Company's servants of more prosperous times, the representatives of merchants of Portuguese extraction, or the ladies of Armenian families. These latter named are frequently extremely handsome, and nearly as fair as Europeans; but though adopting English fashions in dress, they do not speak the language, and sing in Hindoostanee to their performances on the piano. They mix very little in the British society of Calcutta, and usually intermarry with persons belonging to their own nation, living in a retired manner within the bosoms of their families, without being entirely secluded like the females of the country in which their ancestors have been so long domiciled.

The daughters and wives of the Portuguese, a numerous and wealthy class, are quite as tawny, and not so handsome, as the natives; they usually dress in a rich and tawdry manner, after the European fashion, which is particularly unbecoming to them: they form a peculiar circle of their own, and though the spinster portion of this community, it is said, prefer British officers to husbands of Portuguese extraction, unions between them are extremely rare.

CHAPTER III.

SCENES IN THE MOFUSSIL: CAWNPORE.

ALTHOUGH our Indian territories are much better and more extensively known than they were even a few years ago, it may still be necessary to translate and explain some of the appellations commonly adopted by the European residents of Bengal, to designate places and things, many of which can scarcely fail to perplex uninitiated ears. The Mofussil is a term applied to the provinces, all the military cantonments, and the residences appointed for civilians beyond the presidency, being called Mofussil stations. Individuals quartered in the provinces, are styled Mofussillites, and if remaining during a long series of years at a distance from the capital, they usually acquire modes and habits which certainly entitle them to some distinguishing appellation. There is, however, nothing invidious or disrespectful in the term, it being applied indiscriminately to all dwellers in the provinces, while those who may have barbarized a little during their seclusion amid wilds and fastnesses, are styled *par*

distinction "jungle-wallahs." It is difficult to explain the precise meaning of the word *wallah:* it is usually translated "fellow;" but to the natives of India, who call Indigo-planters, "*leal* (blue) *wallahs*," camel drivers, "*oonte-wallahs*," &c. it does not convey the idea which we attach to this expression in England.

Cawnpore is one of the principal stations of the Mofussil, and is situated upon the right bank of the Ganges, about 600 miles from Calcutta. It is seldom that this cantonment has received common justice from its describers, the duty being rather annoying; military men, who, except upon service, usually object to the toils and tasks of their profession, dislike it because they are, what they are pleased to style, harassed by inspections, field-days, drills, committees, &c. &c. Those who do not choose to avow the real cause of their disgust, complain that it is dusty and hot; but these are disadvantages which it must share with all the stations within some hundred miles, while they are more than counterbalanced by the numerous enjoyments afforded by its superior size and the number of its inhabitants.

With the exception of the Ganges, which rolls its broad waves beside the British lines, nature

has done little for Cawnpore; but the sandy plain, broken occasionally into ravines, which forms its site, has been so much embellished by the hand of man, that an unprejudiced person, not subjected to the miseries of field-days, will not hesitate to say that it possesses much picturesque beauty.

The garrison consists of a European regiment of dragoons, and one of native cavalry; several battalions of artillery, horse, and foot; one King's, and three Company's regiments of infantry; a major-general in command; and the numerous staff attached to the head-quarters of a large district. There are few civilians, two judges and two collectors, with their assistants, comprising the whole of the Company's civil servants (the aristocracy of India), who are stationed at Cawnpore. These personages, having far better allowances, and being settled in one place for a longer period, have handsomer houses, more numerous trains of servants, and live in better style than the military residents; but the difference at Cawnpore is not so remarkable as at many other stations, on account of the high rank, and consequently the large incomes, of many of the officers belonging to the garrison.

Two or three indigo-planters in the neighbourhood complete the *grande monde* of Cawnpore; but there

are other British residents, who form a second circle: the owners of shops and farms, coach-makers, bakers, and tailors, to whom it must be a much more desirable place of abode than a smaller station, since it affords them the advantage of society. A solitary individual, belonging to a class which is not considered visitable in India, must feel peculiarly isolated. Though he might be inclined to stoop to a lower grade, excepting where there is a European regiment, he cannot find associates from his own country; and even an intimate acquaintance with the language could scarcely enable an Englishman to feel any gratification in a companionship with Hindoos or Moosulmans, even of a rank superior to his own.

One objection made to Cawnpore is its want of concentration; the lines of the various regiments straggle to the distance of five miles along the river's bank, and it is deemed a hardship to travel so far to visit a friend: but the scene is thereby agreeably diversified, and the compounds (a corruption of the Portuguese word *campania*), which surround the bungalows, are larger than could be the case if its limits were more circumscribed. Many of these compounds are beautifully planted, and have a very park-like appearance, particularly

during the rainy season, when the cultivated parts of the plain have put on their green mantle. The prickly pear is greatly in request for fences; and the tall pagoda-like aloe, with a base resembling the crown of a gigantic pine-apple, frequently intervening, forms a magnificent embellishment to the plantations.

The houses at Cawnpore are, with very few exceptions, *cutcha*, that is, built of unbaked mud, and either choppered (thatched) or tiled; but they are, generally speaking, extremely large and commodious. The plans of bungalows are various, but the most common consist of three centre rooms; those opening on the front and back verandah being smaller than the one occupying the interior, which is called the hall; these rooms communicate with three others, much narrower on each side, and at the four corners are bathing rooms, taken off the verandah, which stretches all round. The centre, and largest room, has only the borrowed lights permitted by eight, ten, or twelve doors leading out of the surrounding apartments: these doors are always open, but some degree of privacy is obtained by a curtain attached to each, of a sort of gauze-work, formed of bamboo split very fine, and coloured green; these also serve to

keep out the flies, while they admit air and all the light considered necessary by an Anglo-Indian, who seldom allows a single ray to penetrate into his *sanctum sanctorum*.

Many of the Cawnpore houses are splendidly furnished; the chairs, tables, and sofas being of valuable wood, richly carved, with cushions and coverings of damask: but the absence of curtains, pictures, and looking-glasses, which harbour too many musquitos and other insects to be introduced with impunity, and the bareness of the walls, whose sole ornaments consist of lamps in glass shades, detract from the general effect. The floors, which are of *chunam* (finely tempered lime), are covered in the first instance, with a matting, and in the second, with a *setringee*, a peculiar manufacture of the country, of an exceeding thick texture, and usually woven in shaded blue stripes; or with calico printed in Brussels patterns, and so closely resembling a carpet as to deceive all save practised eyes. This forms the general decoration of the houses in the upper provinces; and as it may appear to Europeans to be a very indifferent substitute for our worsted manufactures, it may be necessary to say a few words in explanation. With a little care, this apparently fragile material will

last three years; for as the servants never enter the house with their feet covered, and the boots and shoes of the male residents or visitors, not being much used for walking, are lighter and less destructive than those intended for pedestrians, comparatively little damage is done to the floor-cloth. The bungalow will require a new *chopper*, and a general repair, once in three years, and when this takes place, new cloths are put down.

At Mirzapore, a native city between Benares and Allahabad, there is a manufactory for carpets, which are scarcely inferior to those of Turkey: but this fabric is too thick and warm for Indian wear, excepting during the cold season. The exterior of a bungalow is usually very unpicturesque, bearing a strong resemblance to an overgrown barn; the roof slopes down from an immense height to the verandah, and whatever be the covering, whether tiles or thatch, it is equally ugly: in many places the cantonments present to the eye a succession of huge conical roofs, resting upon low pillars; but in Cawnpore the addition of stone fronts to some of the houses, and of bowed ends to others, give somewhat of architectural ornament to the station.

The gardens rank amongst the finest in India. In consequence of there being so many settled residents,

they are much cultivated and improved; all the European vegetables, with the exception of broad beans, come to great perfection during the cold season, and the grapes and peaches, which are not common to other stations, are particularly fine. The pine-apple does not grow in the upper provinces, but the mangos, plantains, melons, oranges, shaddocks, custard-apples, limes, and guavas, are of the finest quality. These gardens, intermixed with forest trees, give Cawnpore a very luxuriant appearance; it is an oasis reclaimed from the desert, for all around wastes of sand extend to a considerable distance.

In the centre of the cantonments, and on the highest ground, are two stone buildings of a very imposing exterior,—the assembly-rooms and the theatre; the latter, a long oval, surrounded by a colonnade of pillars of the Roman Doric order, though ornamental to the station, is not very well adapted to the purpose for which it was intended: a horse-shoe form would have been better suited for the accommodation of an audience, for the spectators, who are seated in the back rows of the pit (there are no boxes) have little chance of hearing what is going on upon the stage.

Beyond the theatre, the road leads to the race-

course, which is approached by a long avenue well planted on either side, and watered during the dry season. This avenue forms the evening drive, and at sunset it is thronged with carriages of every description, and equestrians mounted upon all sorts of horses. Chariots, barouches, brichtskas, and double phætons, fresh from the best builders of London or Calcutta, appear amid old coaches, old sociables, ricketty landaus, buggies, stanhopes, tilburies, and palanquin-carriages,—the latter not unfrequently drawn by bullocks, and all in various stages of dilapidation, for no one in India cares about being seen in a shabby vehicle; those which have borne the wear and tear of the jungles for many a long day, are still deemed fit for service at Cawnpore, for there is little of that false shame to be found amongst the Indian community, which is productive of so much mortification and privation at home. The equestrians present an equally incongruous appearance,—the tall English charger, the smaller but handsome offspring of the Company's stud, and the graceful Arab, prance along by the side of the wild horses and shaggy ponies of native breed.

The Course, as it is termed, skirts a wide plain bounded to the right by the native city, which,

though possessing nothing worthy of a visit, forms a pretty object in the distance; its mosques and pagodas peeping from the summit of a woody ridge. The plain also affords a busy, and to a stranger's eyes, an interesting scene. Groupes of natives are to be seen seated round their fires, cooking, eating, or singing after a repast, while the stately elephant, and strings of home-bound camels, loaded with forage, look like giant phantoms as the twilight deepens.

The mixture of foreign and familiar objects at Cawnpore, to a person newly arrived in India, is very singular. In smaller stations, it is impossible ever to forget that we are far from home; but here, surrounded by Europeans, and beguiled by the throng of English-built carriages into the idea that we are in some old accustomed spot, the sudden appearance of a camel or an elephant, or a fantastic groupe of natives, seems quite startling.

Upon one evening in the week, the Course is deserted for the band of the King's dragoon regiment, which is assembled in a convenient place near the riding-school, and on these occasions the illusion is the most perfect. The equipages are drawn up two or three deep in a circle, many of the equestrians dismount, and lounging from carriage to carriage, con-

verse with the inmates of each: we forget for a short period that we are exiles, but as the night darkens the charm is dispelled. Returning homewards, the cries of jackals burst upon the ear, and lights glaring between the trees in the compounds display domestic arrangements which savour strongly of a foreign land: troops of servants are to be seen carrying covered dishes from the cook-room to the house, and *hookah-badars*, seated on the ground in the open air, are employed in making preparations for their masters' enjoyment of the fragrant weed, with its accompaniments of rose-water and other costly appendages of the *chillum*. We can no longer fancy ourselves in England, but the scene is animated and pleasing, and when, arriving at our own abode, we find the house lighted up, the table laid, and the servants in attendance, were it not for that home-sickness of the heart, from which comparatively few Anglo-Indians are exempt, we might be content with a lot cast upon the plains of Hindostan.

There are two regular chaplains on the establishment, but Cawnpore is destitute of a church. No engineer officer will undertake to erect one for the sum offered by government, and in these days of cutting and clipping, no one feels willing to sub-

scribe towards a building, which all agree it is the bounden duty of the gentlemen in Leadenhall-street to provide for their poor servants. The service, under these disadvantageous circumstances, is performed alternately at each end of the cantonments; the riding-school of the King's dragoons being given up on one Sunday, and a small bungalow near the infantry lines, in which marriages and christenings are performed, being appropriated in turn to the dwellers in the neighbourhood: neither will accommodate the whole of the station at once. This state of things is really disgraceful to Cawnpore, and unless some very active engineer officer should be appointed, and exceedingly vivid representations made of the grievance, it is likely to continue, for money seems to become scarcer in India every day.

Cawnpore, though usually a gay station, is, of course, subject to the vicissitudes produced by the fluctuating state of Indian society. It cannot, however, be so much affected by party-spirit, or the indisposition of leading residents to enter into amusements, as smaller places, and amongst so many families, an agreeable circle must always be found. In its best days, the entertainments are various, and suited to the different seasons; and

notwithstanding the difficulty which is always found amid amateurs to "settle the play," the theatre is generally opened once a month, even during the hot winds. The performances are of course very unequal, depending frequently upon extraneous aid. It is no uncommon circumstance to request the attendance of the Roscius of some distant station, and the arrival of the "star" secures a full audience. The house is very elegantly fitted up, the benches in the parterre being provided with handsomely-carved backs; while all the other ornaments are particularly chaste and appropriate. It is very easy of access, several doors opening on the verandah; these outlets, however, though convenient and necessary to secure the circulation of air, are unfavourable to the transmission of sound; but altogether there can scarcely be a prettier scene than that which is afforded by this bright saloon, when crowded by officers decked in gay uniforms, and interspersed with parties of well-dressed ladies, who, however, bear a small proportion to the beaux, for independent of travellers and occasional visitants, it is seldom that there are more than forty belonging to a certain rank who are attached to the station, and this is considered a large number out of Calcutta.

Much taste and talent is usually displayed in the scenery and dresses, and with one drawback—the performance of female characters by the fiercer sex—the Cawnpore theatricals are really delightful. Though sometimes an ambitious aspirant may insist upon tearing passion to rags in lofty verse, such exhibitions are comparatively rare; light farces and gay comedy are usually preferred, both by the actors and the audience, and the whim and humour frequently displayed would do credit to veteran stagers.

Outside of the theatre, the carriages and servants in waiting form a singular scene; palanquins, buggies, and vehicles of all descriptions are brought into requisition; half the attendants compose themselves to sleep, while the other half are smoking; but when summoned, they vie with their brethren in London in creating bustle and confusion, each thinking his own honour implicated in keeping up the consequence of his master.

After the play, it is customary to end the evening with a supper and ball at the neighbouring assembly rooms; the tables are laid out, and the *khidmutgars*, watching the movements of their masters and mistresses, place themselves behind their chairs, and produce plates, knives, forks and

glasses,—a singular custom in the upper provinces, where those articles are scarce, and where the guests at large parties are invited to come "camp-fashion," that is, to provide their own spoons, &c. The Cawnpore assembly-rooms are extremely handsome; those apartments devoted to dancing and the supper are built in the Anglo-Indian style, being divided down the length by two rows of pillars, leaving a wide space in the centre; sofas are placed between the pillars, and floods of light stream from the wall-shades and chandeliers. The floors are boarded: no common circumstance in India, where the depredations of the white ants are so much dreaded.

None, save those who have danced upon a mat covering a chunam floor, can truly appreciate the luxury of boards; and the English belle, swimming through a quadrille on a warm summer evening, can form no idea of the fatigues which her Indian friends are undergoing, while performing the same evolutions upon a clay ground, the thermometer up to a hundred, and in a perfect atmosphere of musquitos. That dancing altogether should not be banished from the Company's territories by universal consent, seems very surprising; yet so perverse is the human disposition, that an amusement the least calculated for the climate, is the most

popular all over India. When other music cannot be procured, drums and fifes are introduced, and imagination can scarcely conceive the variety of torture to which the unhappy dancer is subjected. The natives look on in surprise, wondering that the *saibs* should take so much trouble, since professional persons are to be hired in every bazaar to perform for their amusement.

But to return to the ball-room at Cawnpore. Upon state occasions the whole compound is lighted up; an operation in which the natives delight, and which is performed by driving bamboos into the ground, and fastening a small *chiraug* (an earthen lamp) to each: these cressets afford a very bright light, and when they are numerous, and the night is dark, they have a splendid effect. Strangers are directed to private houses on party nights by the illuminations in the neighbourhood, and when there is a very large assembly, the dusky countenances and white drapery of the attendants, who flock in multitudes to the spot, are never seen to so much advantage. Besides the coachmen, grooms, running footmen, palanquin and torch-bearers, each person takes one servant, and those who affect state, two or three, to wait upon them during the evening, and as the superior domestics dress very splen-

didly, they perform no inconsiderable part in the pageant.

During the cold season, all the infantry corps forming the garrison of Cawnpore, usually encamp upon a wide plain in the vicinity, for the convenience of better ground for the performance of military evolutions, than is to be found in the cantonments. An Indian camp affords a very striking and curious spectacle, and though the admixture of trees adds much to its beauty and heightens its effect, yet when, as at Cawnpore, it arises in the midst of an uncultivated desert, the singularity of the scene it presents compensates for the loss of the more pleasing features of the landscape.

Regular streets and squares of canvas stretch over an immense tract; each regiment is provided with its bazaar in the rear, and far beyond the lines, the almost innumerable camp-followers of every description form their bivouacs. The tents of the commanding officers are indicated by small red flags; but in no place is it so easy for strangers to lose their way, there is so much uniformity in the several avenues, and the natives make such strange havoc of English names, that an hour may be spent in wandering before the abode of a

friend can be found. All the Mofussillites are accustomed to spend a large portion of their time under canvas, and in consequence of the necessity of providing a moveable habitation, there are few tents which do not boast more comfort than can be easily imagined by those who are only acquainted with an European marquee. All are double, the interior and exterior covering being about a foot and a-half apart; those which are double-poled contain several commodious apartments, and are furnished with glass doors to fit into the openings. They are usually lined with some gaily-coloured chintz; the floors are well-covered with *setringees*, and they have convenient space enclosed at the rear by *kanauts* (a wall of canvas) for out-offices and bathing-rooms. Moveable stoves are sometimes provided for the cold weather, but there is a better contrivance, inasmuch as smoke is thereby avoided, in an imitation of the Spanish *brassero*. A large brass or copper basin, in common use, called a *chillum chee*, mounted on an iron tripod, is filled with red wood embers, and fuel thus prepared, without having the deleterious effect of charcoal, diffuses a genial warmth throughout the tent, and is very necessary in the evening; for though, during the cold season, the sun is still too fierce at noon-

day to confront without shelter, as soon as its rays are withdrawn, intense cold succeeds, a sharp piercing wind sweeps along the plains, and the thermometer sinks below the freezing point.

The transition is so severe between the heat of the day and the frost of the night, that European dogs can only be preserved from its effects by the addition of warm clothing. Every evening, at sun-set, the servant who has the care of the canine race, equips each animal with a quilted coat, which is taken off in the morning. These rapid and striking changes are extremely trying to delicate constitutions, and there can scarcely be any thing more disagreeable than a state of affairs of constant occurrence, namely, exposure at one and the same time to a hot sun and a bleak wind.

Under the noontide glare, the white walls of an extensive camp stretched over a bare and sandy plain, are exceedingly painful to the eyes, but in the twilight, and at night, it assumes a romantic aspect. Innumerable fires arise in every direction, horses picketed, camels and bullocks reposing in groupes, present endless varieties of forms, all softened or exaggerated by the deepening shadows, or flickering lights.

The artillery stationed at Cawnpore, horse and

foot, are sufficiently numerous to form a camp of their own, which occupies another plain of vast extent beyond some very wild ravines. Upon reviews and grand field-days, it is usual for the commandants of all the corps to give public breakfasts in turn, and these military spectacles rank amongst the most characteristic and spirit-stirring amusements of the East. All officers, whether upon leave or at Cawnpore on military duties unconnected with field displays, such as witnesses on courts-martial, &c. are expected to attend; wherefore the ladies are always sure of a gallant escort of beaux, not actively engaged in the toils of the day. Many parties proceed to the field on horseback, attended by *syces* on foot, well armed with spears, in order to ward off the attacks of loose chargers, who after throwing their riders run wild over the plains; a frequent occurrence where natives congregate, mounted upon the most vicious animals that ever submitted to the rein. Some of the ladies are conveyed upon elephants, but the majority go in carriages, which are drawn up at a convenient distance from the scene of action. The neighbouring city sends forth its multitudes on horseback and on foot, on camels, or in vehicles of native construction, and the sandy wilderness literally swarms with life.

To the beautiful precision of peaceable military evolutions succeeds the mimic war. The shock of contending battalions, the charge, the dispersion, the rally, and the retreat: squadrons of cavalry tear up the ground with their hoofs, "loud roars the red artillery," and now with their shining panoply glittering in the sun, and now obscured by clouds of dust, the assailants and the assailed appear and disappear like some vision raised by an enchanter's wand. At the breaking-up of the field-day, the invited guests gladly adjourn to the less intellectual part of the entertainment; dressing tents are provided for the ladies, who shake off the morning's dust, and repair their charms, by re-arranging the hair, and re-smoothing the drapery. The gentlemen also make a brief toilette, and then the bugle summons to breakfast. To unaccustomed eyes, nothing can be more surprising than the spacious saloons thrown open upon these occasions for the reception of company. I remember once losing my way in the intricate passages connecting the apartments of a tent, fitted up for the accommodation of a large party of ladies.

An Indian breakfast is allowed to be an unrivalled repast, and it is to be found in as full perfection in the midst of a desert, as when spread

upon the princely boards of the City of Palaces. Indian servants never permit their masters to regret the want of regular kitchens; all places appear to be the same to them, and our *déjeúnés à la fourchette*, in camp, could not be surpassed in the Land of Cakes. Fish of every kind, fresh, dried, pickled, or preserved, or hermetically sealed in tin; delicate fricassees, risolles, croquettes, omelettes, and curries of all descriptions; cold meats and game of all sorts; patés, jellies, and jams from London and Lucknow; fruits and sweetmeats; with cakes in endless variety, splendidly set out in china, cut glass, and silver, the guests providing their own tea-cups, plates, &c.

There are races at Cawnpore during the cold season, and as they have been long established, they generally afford good sport. These races form a very amusing scene, the male spectators, with few exceptions, appearing in masquerade; for the object being to divest the meeting of all military shew, the young men endeavour to imitate, as nearly as their wardrobes will permit, the dress and appointments of English country gentlemen, farmers, and even rustics: rather a difficult achievement, where there is so little opportunity of keeping up a stock of plain clothes, and where young men, not

anticipating the necessity of assuming a peaceable character, have neglected to provide themselves with a fitting disguise. Ingenuity is racked to find substitutes for the coveted garments; happy are those who possess a single-breasted coat, topped boots, and corduroys; round hats and jockey-caps are at a premium, and native tailors are employed to manufacture fac-similes of uncouth garments from all sorts of materials. Many of the gentlemen ride their own matches, and there is generally a very amusing *melée*, in which all descriptions of horses are entered, and which affords the greatest sport to those lookers-on not interested in the favourites. Prodigious quantities of gloves and lavender-water are lost and won by the ladies, and ruinous consequences too frequently result from the more serious transactions of the betting-stand.

Gambling is one of the great evils of Indian life; and though much more limited in its extent than in former times, it is still productive of debt, difficulty, and disgrace to numbers of heedless young men. In Cawnpore, it is sometimes carried to a very dangerous extent; more particularly at those seasons when there are few balls and parties to divert the attention of idle youths from cards and dice: and at those periods the want of a public

library is also severely felt. The supply of books is seldom equal to the demand; for though there are numerous clubs established in the various corps, and a few private collections belonging to the residents, the works which are to be found in all are chiefly of a light and desultory description. Books of instruction and reference are rarely to be purchased or borrowed, and however anxious young men may be to make themselves acquainted with the natural productions of India, or to study its political history, they must remain destitute of the means, unless they can afford to send to Calcutta or to England for the necessary materials.

Had the government established libraries at the head-quarters of every district, a trifling subscription from the temporary residents would have sufficed to keep them up, and the advantage to young men of a studious turn would have been incalculable: but there are no facilities given for the acquisition of knowledge, and it must be picked up under the most disadvantageous circumstances. This, with the exception of Mhow, where a library has been established, is the case in every part of the Bengal presidency; and when the extreme youth of the cadets who are sent from school to fill up the vacancies of the Indian army, and their want of

opportunities for improvement after their arrival, are taken into consideration, the highly intellectual state of society throughout Hindostan must excite surprise.

A church and a well-furnished library alone are wanting to render Cawnpore as delightful a residence, as an eastern climate and military duties will permit. It has not the reputation of being unhealthy, though, in the rainy season, it shares with other stations the prevalent diseases of fever and ague, and being the high road to the frontiers, many travellers pause on their journey, after having received the seeds of their disorders in distant places, to lay their remains in the crowded cemetery of Cawnpore. During the hot winds it is burning, stifling, smothering; but all places liable to this terrible visitation (the simoom and sirocco of travellers' tales) are equally scorching, and in some districts the blasts from the gaseous furnace, from which the plague must emanate, blow all night, whereas at Cawnpore they subside at sun-set.

Persons newly arrived from England or Calcutta, may deem Cawnpore a semi-barbarous place, since wolves stray into the compounds, and there are bungalows in which the doors, destitute of locks or

handles, will not shut: but the arrivals from out-stations, dwellers in the jungle, companions of bears and boars (biped and quadruped), look upon it as an earthly paradise. It is well supplied with every article of European manufacture necessary for comfort, or even luxury, though it must be confessed that they are frequently too high-priced to suit subalterns' allowances. The bazaars are second to none in India; beef, mutton, fish, and poultry being of the finest quality: vegetables of all kinds may be purchased by those who have not gardens of their own, there being a sufficient demand to induce the natives to cultivate exotics for the market. In addition to the shops kept by Europeans, there are many warehouses filled with English and French goods, belonging to Hindoo and Moosulman merchants; and the jewellers are scarcely inferior to those of Delhi.

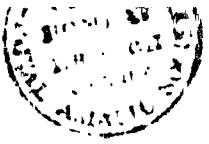
Cawnpore is celebrated for the manufacture of saddlery, harness, and gloves; though less durable than those of English make, the cheapness and beauty of the two former articles recommend them to the purchaser; and the gloves offer a very respectable substitute for the importations from France. Prints of fashions supply the mantua-makers and tailors with ideas, and as there is no lack of materials,

the ladies of Cawnpore are distinguished in the Mofussil for a more accurate imitation of the toilettes of London and Paris, than can be achieved at more remote stations. Indeed, the contrast between the female residents, and their visitants from the surrounding jungles, is often extremely amusing.

The river's bank affords some very fine situations for bungalows, and the inequality of the ground offers many advantages to those in the interior of the cantonments. The roads are kept in good order, and as they stretch along thick plantations occasionally relieved by glimpses of European houses, or cross the broad parade-grounds and other open tracts, the bits of native scenery, a small mosque, a pagoda, or a well, peeping from the trees; the long alleys of a bazaar, and the open sheds of numerous artizans, present so many pleasing combinations, that the eye must be dull of perception which cannot find an infinity of beauty in the various drives and rides. Lucknow, the capital of the neighbouring kingdom of Oude, is only a few marches distant from Cawnpore, and forms a favourite excursion, more especially whenever any particular festivities are going on at the court. In the proper season, hunting-parties are

also frequently made to look for tigers and wild hogs in the islands of the Ganges, or amid the deep jungles of its opposite shore.

To the antiquary the neighbourhood of Cawnpore is peculiarly interesting, for many of the learned have agreed that it contains the site of the ancient city of Palibothra.



CHAPTER IV.

FEMININE EMPLOYMENTS, AMUSEMENTS, AND DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

A PLEASANT paper, which appeared some years ago in the *New Monthly Magazine*, in enumerating the sources of female happiness, proved incontestably, that they were infinitely more abundant than those which were open to the male portion of the community belonging to a certain class. The writer, it appears, never could have been in India, or he would have excepted the cases of his Eastern acquaintance; for, unhappily, in the clime of the sun, it is exceedingly difficult to find expedients either to trifle with or kill the enemy; and nearly unmitigated *ennui* is the lot of the majority of luckless women who, in a less subduing atmosphere, might have amused themselves very respectably by winding silk, cutting paper, or tatting. Manufactures of bread-seals and bead-bracelets do not flourish in India, partly from the difficulty of obtaining patterns and materials, and partly from the

absence of stimulants to industry. Anglo-Indian ladies have not the same constant intercourse with each other, which prevails at home; the work-table does not bring parties of young people together, united by a similarity of pursuit, and emulous to outdo each other in some ornamental piece of stitchery; they cannot watch the progress of their friends' undertakings, and, excepting in some few cases, where the mind and the fingers are equally active, and where the heat of the climate is beneficial to the constitution, idleness is the order of the day. During the greater part of the year, the slightest exertion is a toil; and habits acquired in the sultry season, are not easily laid aside at the arrival of the brief period of cold weather. The punkah also is very inimical to occupation; there is no possibility of enduring existence out of the reach of the influence of this enormous fan, and while it is waving to and fro, weights are requisite to secure every light article upon the table: should they be unadvisedly removed, away flies the whole apparatus to different parts of the room, and the degree of irritability produced by trifling circumstances of this nature, superadded to the excessive heat and the perpetual buzzing and stinging of musquitoes, can scarcely be imagined by those who have never ex-

perienced the difficulty of pursuing any employment under the infliction of so many annoyances. Still, however, the grand cause of female listlessness may be traced to the comparatively little communication which takes place between the ladies of different families. Morning visits, excepting those of mere ceremony, are left to the gentlemen, who proceed from house to house in their daily tour, with perseverance which defies the thermometer.

This being the state of affairs, it might be supposed that conversation will assume a higher tone than when needles and thimbles, satin-stitch and chain-stitch, supply the *matériel*: and where there are no old maids, to whom (where they abound) credit is given for the invention of every gossip's tale, it might be presumed that scandal would be wanting. It is grievous to be obliged to vindicate the tabby race at the expense of that part of the creation who are styled its lords; but, sooth to say, there is no watering-place, country town, or village in England, which can match an Indian station, whether at the presidencies or in the Mofussil, for censoriousness; and it is equally matter of fact, that the male residents, young and old, married and single, if not always the actual authors

of the slander, are the purveyors, disseminators, and reporters. It is to them that the ladies are indebted for all the news, private and public, at the place; they report the progress of flirtations, and hazard conjectures upon their probable issue. They are narrow observers of what is passing at every house, and carry a detailed account to the neighbouring families: not failing, of course, to put their own colouring upon every thing which they relate, or to add (for the sake of heightening the effect) a few incidents necessary to give piquancy to their narratives. Nor do these gallant cavaliers disdain to attend to trifles which are generally deemed to belong exclusively to the feminine department; they condescend to report upon flounces and furbelows, descending to all the minutiæ of plaits and puckering, and criticising the whole paraphernalia, from the crowning comb to the shoe-tie. Their descriptive powers are particularly called forth by the appearance of new arrivals. Woe to the unfortunate matron or spinster, who shall be the first to bring out any striking change of fashion! she is the mark for every witling; not a tongue is silent; it is an offence to the whole community to convict it of being behind the modes of London or Paris, and the attempt to instruct is

resented as an imposition. Pretty girls often sit at their first balls without partners, none of the young men having nerve enough to dance with persons, whom they and their associates have so unmercifully cut up. However exactly they may be dressed after the most approved costume of a leading milliner at home, they are considered *outré* by the old-fashioned figures with whom they are doomed to mingle; and though their patterns are gradually adopted, nothing can be more ungracious than the manner in which persons convinced against their will, conform to any thing new and strange. In all this the gentlemen are the ringleaders; it is the dread of their ridicule which influences the weaker sex. It may be said that their sarcasms are encouraged by their female friends, and their gossiping tales well received; but as they are clearly the majority, it must be in their power to introduce a better system. Complaints are eternally made of the frivolity of the women, but persons well acquainted with society in India, may be permitted to doubt whether they should be made to bear the whole burthen of the charge. A female coterie is a thing almost unknown; the dread of exposure to the heat of the sun prevents ladies from congregating together in the morning; and at dinner-parties and balls they are wholly en-

grossed by the gentlemen. It is thought very extraordinary, and rather disgraceful, to see a lady enter a room without the arm of a male escort; the usual complement is two. At morning calls, the master of the mansion, as soon as it is announced that there is a *Bibby Saib* (a lady) coming, is expected to rush to the door of the house, and hand the fair visitor in, though she may be accompanied by one or more gentlemen. Ladies are never seen walking together in a ball-room; and though the most elegant female can scarcely preserve a graceful appearance while supported on each side by a male arm, it is the custom in India, and the exhibition must be made, upon pain of incurring the imputation of desiring a *tête-à-tête*. Attention and flattery will usually reconcile a woman to the loss of the society of her own sex—but by many the privation is severely felt; they miss the warm and cordial greetings, the delight of a reunion after brief absences, and the pleasing confidential chatting, to which they have been accustomed in their native land. On the score of gaiety, much is lost by the separation of the female portion of an assembly from each other, for nothing can be more formally decorous than the appearance of an Indian ball-room, where the promenaders move round in lugu-

brious order, and where cold and distant recognitions alone pass between intimate acquaintance. The handings, and shawlings, and fannings, of male attendants, which a lady must change perpetually if she would avoid the appearance of retaining regular *cavalieri serventi*, are poor substitutes for the groups of gay girls with whom she was wont to join in animated converse. At length, perchance, estranged from her own sex by long habit, she acquires a distaste for female society, and, should she return to England, will talk of India as a paradise, and feel neglected and miserable when no longer surrounded by a troop of gentlemen.

In the Upper Provinces, this state of affairs is universal; but in Calcutta, a little change takes place; during the cold season, ladies spend their mornings with each other, and shop and visit together; those also who do not dance, occupy the same sofas in a ball-room: but there always appears to be a want of congeniality amongst them; a civil sort of indifference seems the prevailing feeling,* for there is less of rivalry and jealousy

* The writer does not intend to insinuate that there are no such things as female friendships in India, or that instances of real and cordial affection, subsisting between individuals of the softer sex, are of rare occurrence: it is the general tone and manner which is here described, and which is sufficiently obvious to surprise a stranger.

than is to be met with elsewhere: a circumstance easily to be accounted for, since the majority are married women, and, generally speaking, models of propriety of conduct. A few there are, certainly, as must be the case in all large communities, who afford food for scandal, either by actual levity of demeanour, or a careless gaiety too closely approaching it; but all persons who have seen the world will acknowledge, that the strict rules of propriety are less frequently violated by the Anglo-Indian ladies than by those comprising the gay circles of society in Europe.

To many persons, the circumstance of having nothing to do, will compensate for the dearth of amusement; and indolent habits, if not natural to the disposition, may be acquired. An active spirit will of course always find employment for itself; but more than ordinary powers, both of mind and constitution, are requisite to struggle against the influence of the climate, and the difficulties which an imperfect knowledge of the Hindoostanee language throw in the way of household management. After breakfast, the ladies of a family usually employ themselves, while awaiting the arrival of visitors (whose calls take place as early as ten o'clock), in superintending the labours of their *dirzees* (tailors)—a severe trial of patience. Though

very neat workmen, few amongst them are equal to the task of cutting out; and they do not profess to fit on, a business which is left to the lady and her *ayah*. If a pattern dress be given to them, they copy it with accuracy: but have no idea of the method of reducing or enlarging the dimensions, to suit the peculiar figures of their employers. Like the brethren of their craft in other countries, they require to be sharply looked after, being much addicted to the abstraction of those remnants of odds and ends, which in England go under the denomination of 'cabbage.' These perquisites of their office are turned to great advantage in the manufacture of skull-caps, called *topees*, which are invariably worn by their fellow-domestics when off duty, and which, especially if formed of gay silk, lace, or embroidery, find a ready sale. Many droll scenes take place between ladies and their *dirzees;* the horror, consternation, and rage of the former, when they discover that some precious garment has been spoiled beyond repair, and the blank looks of the latter, while their handy-works are held up in judgment against them, are frequently so exceedingly ludicrous, that they cannot fail to excite the risibility of the bystanders. Happy may the unfortunate tailor think himself,

if the arrival of a visitor should suspend hostilities, and give his justly-incensed mistress time to cool Nor is it the *dirzee* alone who excites his lady's wrath; servants, those fruitful sources of plague in all civilized countries, sometimes contrive, in India, to occasion an infinity of trouble. In justice, however, to this maligned race, it must be admitted, that reasonable people, acquainted with the customs of the natives, or willing to be instructed in them, may escape many of the pains and penalties usually connected with a large establishment. It is astonishing how easily the multitude of domestics, necessarily attached to an Anglo-Indian household, may be managed, and in almost every instance it is the fault of the master or the mistress if the servants be disreputable or inattentive to their duties. Kind treatment, and the accurate payment of wages at stated periods, are alone necessary to secure the attachment of numerous dependants; and it is much to be regretted, that ill-temper, and disregard of prejudices, should, in so many instances, produce a contrary effect.

An establishment in the Bengal presidency is composed of various descriptions of Moosulman and Hindoo servants, all of whom have their

respective offices. The *khansamah*, or head of the household, must be a Moosulman, and it is of great consequence that he should be an active and respectable man, for upon his exertions the comfort of a family must in a great measure depend. He acts in the capacity of major-domo, purveyor, and confectioner, superintending the cooking department, making the jellies and jams, and attending to all the more delicate and elaborate details of the *cuisine*. All the other servants are, or ought to be, under his immediate control, and when he is made answerable for their conduct, things usually go on very smoothly. In addition to the khansamah, whose place at table is behind his master's chair, there are other attendants of his own class, called *khidmutgars*, one being attached to each individual of the family. Strictly speaking, the duty of these men is merely to attend at meals; but they will cook upon occasion, and indeed are fond of shewing their skill in the art, and also, where economy is considered, act as the *abdar* (butler), who cools the wine, &c., or as the *hookah-badar* (pipe-bearer), and chillum manufacturer. But servants are often especially retained for these purposes; and when that is the case, the master of the mansion, either abroad or at home,

is attended by his *khansamah*, *abdar*, and *hookah-badar*, all splendidly dressed, and standing at the back of his chair. One or two cooks, according to the style of living, and the same number of *mussaulchees* (scullions), complete the table servants, who must all be Moosulmans, the Hindoos objecting, on account of their religion, to have anything to do with the kitchen, carrying their scruples so far, as to refuse to touch a clean plate, in consequence of its having been defiled by a portion of a slaughtered animal. The *sirdar bearer*, a Hindoo, acts as valet to the master of the house; he has the care of the oil and wax-candles, and sees to the lighting of the lamps, the dusting of the furniture, and making the beds; he is assisted in these concerns by one or two mates (according to the number of individuals belonging to the family), who pull the punkahs, and in a large establishment, where four or eight are kept, carry the palanquin.

The *mēter* (sweeper), a very essential person, is a low-caste Hindoo, above all prejudice, who sweeps the floors, clears away dirt, and will take care of a dog or other unclean animal. These, with the *ayah* (lady's-maid), the *metranee* (her assistant), and the *dirzee*, compose the servants

employed in in-door offices,—to whom, however, the *bheestie*, or water-carrier, may be added, who supplies the bathing-rooms with water. The *chuprassies* are running-footmen, employed to attend a carriage or a palanquin, to go upon messages, carry letters, bottles, books, or other light articles which they can take in their hands. They are usually, if Hindoo, high-caste men, brahmins being frequently candidates for this office, and in the upper provinces of Hindoostan are seldom seen without swords by their sides. The messengers of Bengal, called *hurkarus*, are a very inferior description of persons, performing the same duties: they sit in the ante-rooms, and are always ready to answer to the "*qui hi?*" (who waits?)

The out-door servants are almost innumerable; every horse must be supplied with a groom and grass-cutter; few houses are destitute either of a garden or a small piece of ground, which requires the care and attention of one or more persons (*mālees*); then there is the *dobhy* (washerman), the *bery-wallah* who has the charge of the goats or sheep; men or boys to look after the poultry; extra water-carriers, and other extras, *ad infinitum*.

In Calcutta every house must have a porter, or

durwān; and in the provinces, a *chokeydar*, or watchman, at night.*

When the family assemble for the day, the servants in attendance *salaam* as each person enters the breakfast-room. The *khidmutgars*, of course, are at their posts, and might be deemed sufficient for the purpose,—but the tea-kettle being under the especial superintendence of one of the bearers, he is seldom found willing to entrust it to other hands, scrupulously performing the duties of his office: and although there may be half a dozen other servants in the room, he is seen to fill the tea-pot, or at any rate to bring in the kettle from an iron tripod, called an *ungeeta*, the substitute for an urn, which is filled with lighted charcoal, and kept either outside the house, or in an open verandah. During breakfast, the *māllee* makes his appearance with his baskets of fruit and vegetables, and a small bouquet for each lady placed upon the

* In large establishments in Calcutta, a sircar or steward is kept, who receives no pay, but takes a per-centage out of all the money passing through his hands. The wages of other servants vary from ten rupees to three per month; they feed and clothe themselves, and live in small houses in the compound; a few of the bearers sleep in the house, wrapping themselves up in cloths, and spreading a mat under them, upon the floor.

top. The fruits, &c. are neatly arranged in plantain-leaves, and as he offers his basket round the table, each person takes something, custard-apples, guavas, chillies, sallad, or cresses. After breakfast, the khansamah, who has made his bazaar early in the morning, either lays out his purchases in an ante-room, or sends them in to the lady upon dishes or in baskets; after they are inspected, he takes his orders and retires. The bed-rooms and bathing-rooms being properly arranged for the day, the bearers, with the exception of those left to pull the *punkahs*, betake themselves to their repose, lying down in all directions in the ante-chambers, well covered up to secure them from musquitoes, and looking like so many corpses swathed in grave-clothes.

Such is the state of affairs until the hour of *tiffin;* the chuprassies in attendance announcing guests, and ushering them in and out. As soon as the sun begins to decline, the water-carrier appears with his *mussuck*, and sprinkles the verandahs, and the *chubootur*, a terrace raised in some elevated place. The *mēters* come in with their brooms, and sweep the floors; the bearers draw up the *chiks* or blinds and beat the flies out, taking care to shut them again before they light the lamps, an operation

which is performed the instant it gets dark. Every sleeping-apartment is supplied with a lamp duly placed upon the dressing-table, or in a wall-shade, at the closing in of the brief twilight. Where there is an active and steady khansamah to see that that these things are regularly and thoroughly done, the lady of the house has very little trouble; but indifference to comfort and appearance upon her part, will invariably occasion idleness and slovenliness on that of the servants, exhibited in dusty, worm-eaten furniture, ragged mats, dirt and dilapidation of every kind; for a single day's neglect is quite sufficient to allow the multitudinous hosts of insects, which form the grand destructive power, to gain a-head. An ill-kept house in India is the most deplorable, comfortless-looking place imaginable; it is overrun with vermin of every kind; "rats and mice, and such small deer" disport themselves over it at all hours; frogs croak in the corners, and bats nestle in the cornices. The damps gathered on the mats produce plentiful crops of the endless varieties of the fungus tribe, and should not the red ants succeed in devouring their white brethren, not a door-post will remain in its proper position; while you cannot remove a chair or a table, without the risk of disturbing the family of a cen-

tipede. It is a good plan, even where the servants are most active, to walk quietly through the rooms, and order every article of furniture to change its place: for, at every thorough cleaning, the first rudiments of a rat's nest (where dogs and cats are not kept) may be detected; scorpions, either in an advanced or infant state, are certain to be found under the mats, together with such an incredible quantity of lizards' eggs, that you wonder whether the flies themselves could furnish food for the numberless broods, were they permitted to burst the shell. A lady desirous of preserving neatness and order throughout her dominions, will sometimes visit the cook-room, which is generally at a distance from the house, and take a peep, *en passant*, at the poultry-yard, and the domiciles of her servants. Native attendants have a pride in appearing to advantage, and will take care that nothing shall offend the lady's eye. The cook-room ought to be kept extremely clean; it is generally rather a small place, and so scantily furnished, compared with an English kitchen, that it is marvellous how it can be made to supply the endless number of dishes which issue from its humble roof: but the greater part of the preparations being carried on outside, and there

being always several ranges of hot hearths in the interior, the difficulties are not so great as may be imagined at first sight. The principal fuel in use is charcoal, and the meat is roasted *over*, and not *in front of*, the fire: an arrangement to which connoisseurs in the gastronomic science object.

Those ladies who are either Indian-born, or who have lived long enough in the county to acquire a perfect knowledge of its modes, language, and customs, frequently leave little for the khansamah to do; attending themselves at the godowns (store-rooms), and giving out each article for the day's consumption; seeing wood and charcoal weighed, oil measured, and eggs numbered. A saving in expense is no doubt effected by these exertions: but as, unhappily, they are usually attended by violent scolding matches, after the true Hindoostanee fashion, such minute attention to household affairs is not very desirable. By permitting the khansamah to gain a small profit on his bazaar-accounts, the service is made acceptable to a respectable man, who cannot afford to support a family in a becoming manner upon his bare wages; and a domestic of this description will in almost every case be found exceedingly faithful, attached to the person of his

master, and ready to submit to inconveniences* (which natives generally are not willing to bear), if necessary, to secure the comfort of the family he serves.

In India, we may almost invariably read the character of the master in the countenances and deportment of his servants. If they be handsomely, but not gaudily dressed, respectful but not servile in their demeanour, quiet, orderly, and contented, they bear evidence of the good qualities of their superiors; but where servants exhibit any signs of terror or of absurd obsequiousness, where they never approach without their hands folded as if in prayer, and almost touch the earth in their *salaams;* where they are dirty, ragged, noisy, and constantly changing, the head of the house may safely be pronounced tyrannical, unreasonable, or a bad paymaster,—a description of persons who will never succeed in retaining respectable domestics. A very short residence in the country is sufficient to render the natives well-acquainted with the characters of the Europeans round them; and if once a disgraceful notoriety be obtained, none save thieves

* Such as removing to some remote district, a native of the Upper Provinces to Bengal, or *vice versâ;* going to the hills (the Himalaya), or on board ship.

and outcasts will take service where ill-treatment is sure to follow: hence the origin of the too numerous complaints of persons, who never can meet with a domestic to suit them, who refuse to yield to the customs of the country in which they are doomed to dwell, and consequently are attended only by those who are indifferent to loss of caste or of character.

The difficulty regarding female domestics is certainly very great. It is generally considered essential for the *ayah* to be a Moosulman woman, as none but a low Hindoo would take the office; and it may safely be averred, that not one respectable woman out of a hundred is to be found in this class. The single circumstance of her mingling unveiled with the male domestics, is sufficient to shew that she has lost all claim to reputation; she has seldom any good quality left, excepting honesty; she is idle, slatternly, and dissipated, and frequently even too lazy to see that her assistant performs her duty. Few *ayahs* are at the slightest pains to make themselves acquainted with the mysteries of the European toilette; they dress their ladies all awry, and martyrdom is endured whenever they take a pin in hand: they have no notion of lacing, buttoning, or hook-and-eyeing, and only shew themselves skilful

in the bathing-room, and in brushing and braiding the hair. Folding up dresses is an art wholly unknown, and Griselda herself would find it difficult to keep her temper in the midst of crushed flounces, broken feathers, and gauzes eaten through and through by cock-roaches. European women, if attainable, demand enormous wages; they soon learn to give themselves airs, and require the attendance of natives during the hot weather: the Moosulman *ayah* is usually found the lesser evil of the two, and when she happens to be clever and active, she is a treasure beyond price.

It is advisable to make the *khansamah* engage all the inferior servants, and hold him answerable for their conduct; but there is one privilege usually enjoyed by him to its fullest extent, which it were better to abridge,—the selection of the dinner. He of course provides according to the notions of an Asiatic, who considers abundance to be essential to magnificence, and has no idea of modern European refinement. Anglo-Indians, for the most part, have left England too young to have lost their school-relish for ample fare: to people who know better, it is frequently more easy to fall into new customs than to combat prejudices, for they have not only those of their servants to encounter, but those also

of the whole community, who have been too long accustomed to see tables groaning beneath the weight of the feast, to be satisfied with the light viands served up at a London board. The receipt for an Indian dinner appears to be, to slaughter a bullock and a sheep, and place all the joints before the guests at once, with poultry, &c. to match. The natives are excellent cooks, and might easily be taught the most delicate arts of the *cuisine;* but as their own recipes differ exceedingly from ours, they can only acquire a knowledge of the European style from the instructions of their employers: their hashes, stews, and haricots, are excellent, but a prejudice exists against these preparations amidst the greater number of Anglo-Indians, who fancy that "black fellows" cannot do any thing beyond their own *pillaws,* and are always in dread of some abomination in the mixture: a vain and foolish alarm, where the servants are cleanly, and where no one ever objects to curry.

For these, or some other equally absurd reasons, made dishes form a very small portion of the entertainment given to a large party, which is usually composed of, in the first instance, an overgrown turkey (the fatter the better) in the centre, which is the place of honour; an enormous ham for its

vis-à-vis; at the top of the table appears a sirloin or round of beef; at the bottom a saddle of mutton; legs of the same, boiled and roasted, figure down the sides, together with fowls, three in a dish, geese, ducks, tongues, humps, pigeon-pies, curry and rice of course, mutton-chops and chicken-cutlets. Fish is of little account, except for breakfast, and can only maintain its post as a side-dish.

In the hot season, fish caught early in the morning would be much deteriorated before the dinner hour, it is therefore eaten principally at breakfast. There are no *entremets*, no removes; the whole course is put on the table at once, and when the guests are seated, the soup is brought in. The reason of the delay of a part of the entertainment which invariably takes the precedence in England, is rather curious. All the guests are attended by their own servants, who congregate round the cook-room, and assist to carry in the dinner; were the soup to enter first, these worthies would rush to their masters' chairs, and leave the discomfited *khansamah* at the head of his dishes, without a chance of getting them conveyed to table by his *mussaulchees* under an hour, at least. The second course is nearly as substantial as the first, and makes as formidable an appearance: beef-steaks figure amongst the deli-

cacies, and smaller articles, such as quails or ortolans, are piled up in hecatombs. At the tables of old Indians, the fruit makes a part of the second course; but regular desserts are coming, though slowly, into fashion.

There is always a mixture of meanness and magnificence in every thing Asiatic; the splendid appointments of silver and china, which deck the board, have not their proper accompaniment of rich damask,* but appear upon common cotton cloths, the manufacture of the country. All the glasses are supplied with silver covers, to keep out the flies: but the glasses themselves are not changed when the cloth is removed. It will easily be perceived that there is an air of barbaric grandeur about these feasts, which reminds a stranger of the descriptions he has read of the old baronial style of living; but, unfortunately, the guests invited to assist at the demolition of innumerable victims, want the keen appetite which rendered their martial ancestors such valiant trencher-men. The *burra khanas*, as they are called, at Calcutta, certainly

* It is supposed that, as there are no mangles in India, damask table-linen would lose its glossy hue: but the heavy irons used by the *dholys* answer all the purposes of those huge machines.

afford a festal display, in which the eye, if not the palate, must take pleasure. In a hall paved with marble, supported by handsome stone pillars, and blazing with lights, sixty guests, perhaps, are assembled; punkahs wave above their heads, and chowries of various kinds, some of peacocks' plumes, others of fleecy cow-tails, mounted upon silver handles, are kept in continual agitation, to beat off the flies, by attendants beautifully clad in white muslin. At every third or fourth chair, the *hookah*, reposing on an embroidered carpet, exhibits its graceful splendours, but unhappily the fumes of the numerous chillums, the steam of the dishes, the heat of the lamps, and the crowds of attendants, effectually counteract the various endeavours made to procure a free circulation of air. The petticoated bottles, which make the circuit of the tables instead of decanters, form one of the peculiarities of an Indian table; their ugliness is compensated by their utility, as the wine is kept cool by the wetted cloths which are somewhat fancifully arranged round the necks of the bottles: port, claret, and Burgundy are characteristically attired in crimson, with white flounces; while sherry and Madeira appear in bridal costume. Mr. Hood's pencil would revel in the delineation of these grotesque appendages. The

verandahs present a bustling scene, which, to unaccustomed eyes, is both curious and attractive. There the *hookah-badars* are busy preparing fresh chillums, the *khidmutgars* are putting the tea-equipage in order, and the fires of the *ungeetas* draw groups around them, for at no season of the year is a native averse to the genial warmth of the bright red coal, over which he bends with delight, while Europeans, in despite of *punkahs*, are fainting from excess of heat.

Suppers are the fac-similes of dinners, excepting that there is only one course, and a greater abundance of *Multādnee* soup, which seldom appears excepting at tiffin and supper. Where large parties assemble, a whole sheep is considered necessary to make the stock of this liquid curry, which differs materially from its European namesake; lime-juice and curds forming the principal condiments. It is no uncommon thing to see hot sirloins, rounds and ribs of beef, saddles and haunches of mutton at suppers, in the upper country, while those of Calcutta exhibit geese and turkies. The delicacies of an entertainment consist of hermetically-sealed salmon, red-herrings, cheese, smoked sprats, raspberry jam, and dried fruits: these articles coming from Europe, and being sometimes very difficult to pro-

cure in a fresh and palmy state, are prized accordingly. Female taste has here ample room for its display; but a woman must possess the courage of an Amazon to attempt any innovation upon ancient customs, amid such bigoted people as the Indians, Anglo and native. To abridge the number of the dishes, or to diminish the size of the joints, would infallibly be imputed to the meanest motives; the servants would be ready to expire with shame at their master's disgrace, and the guests would complain of starvation. Ladies who have passed five-and-twenty or thirty years of their lives in Europe, comprise so small a portion of an Indian circle, that they have not the means of effecting any important reform; the majority being merely supplied with school-experience, or from long habit or example wedded to the old regime; while the whole of the male population, masters and servants, are ready to raise a furious outcry against modern fashions and female dictation. The receipt of a celebrated wit, for dressing a cucumber, is unconsciously followed with great precision with respect to an Indian entertainment; for after all the pains and expense bestowed upon them, the dinners and suppers given by the Anglo-Indians are, literally as well as figuratively speaking, thrown away: not

a fiftieth part can be consumed by the guests, the climate will not admit of keeping the remainder, for in the cold season it will get dry, and in the hot weather decomposition speedily takes place, while it is only the very lowest caste of natives who will eat any thing which comes from an European table. In Calcutta, there are multitudes of poor Christians, to whom the remnants of the rich man's feast are very acceptable; but in the upper provinces, even beggars would turn away from the gift.

The gratification to be derived from these dinner-parties depends entirely upon the persons who occupy the next chairs, for they are usually much too large to admit of general conversation, nor are there many topics of general interest, excepting in circles exclusively military, in which speculations upon line steps, and the restoration of batta, form subjects for discussion which never appear to tire. Nothing that occurs in India ever creates a sensation, at least in the same degree which is experienced in Europe at an elopement, a new appearance, a successful play, or the arrival of a distinguished stranger. Rammohun Roy attracted more attention in London than Lord Wm. Bentinck, or any preceding governor-general, did in Calcutta.

Intelligence from the mother-country must be of a very stirring nature to excite the sobered feelings of an Anglo-Indian; and in any revolution occurring at home, the length of time which must elapse before an account of the events which have taken place can reach India, renders it doubtful whether a counteraction has not produced some fresh change; a protracted period of uncertainty destroys interest, and confirmation or contradiction meet a cold reception: numbers are wholly indifferent to foreign events, and care nothing for the destinies of kings and ministers belonging to a distant quarter of the globe. New novels and new poems, those fertile subjects of discussion at parties in England, if spoken of at all, are mentioned coldly and carelessly; they come out to India unaccompanied by the *on dits* which heighten their interest in the land of their production; if anonymous, none know, or care to know, the name of the author; they do not elicit lively disquisitions upon their merits or demerits, nor are people ashamed, as in England, to confess that they have not read a popular work.

Books meet a ready sale in India, and their perusal forms the chief amusement of leisure hours; but they are rarely made the subject of conversation. The literature of the day finds its way to India at

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nearly the same time as the reviews which usher it into the world; but whole circles do not, as in England, run mad about some new publication; there are only a certain number of copies to be procured; a new edition cannot be supplied upon demand, and it would be surprising indeed if enthusiasm were not subdued by so many chilling circumstances. There are no picture-galleries, no exhibitions, no opera to converse about; the musical and dramatic entertainments, being amateur, are scarcely legitimate subjects for criticism, and the observations they elicit too frequently degenerate into personalities. In the dearth of native topics of this description, Anglo-Indians are not willing to be enlightened on affairs of the same nature at home; and new arrivals, who fancy that they shall gain the general ear by vivid accounts of the new wonder they have left in England, are wofully disappointed. Persons who rave about Paganini, Sontag, or Taglioni, are much in the same predicament as the narrators of tiger-hunts at home; they are voted bores, and soon discover that, unless they are prepared to fall into the opinions and prejudices of their new associates, they will sink into nobodies. At the same time, such is the perversity of human nature, that people who are un-

able to furnish accounts of *debutantes* of eminence, new pictures, new music, or new books, are subjected to very severe comments, and stigmatized immediately as springing from some obscure class in England.

A canal through the isthmus of Suez, and regular steam-communication, may effect a great change in Indian society; but until this shall take place, none save stupendous events will have power to awaken it from its lethargy. Lord Byron tells us that the cold in clime are cold in blood; and certainly the burning rays of an Indian sun are insufficient to produce those lava-floods in the veins of an European, which are the birthright of the children of the soil. The strongest excitements are necessary to arouse an Anglo-Indian into action; the sports of the field are reckoned tame and uninteresting, unless they are beset with danger and death, and hence the difficulty of satisfying those who return after long absence to England: "what," say they, "are the poor triumphs of the first of September, compared to the noble warfare which we carry on against the monsters of the wood, where the sharp roar of the tiger is followed by its deadly spring, where the steady rush of the buffalo is fraught with destruction, and the noble charge

of the wild boar demands that eye, and hand, and nerve, should be equally steady and unfailing?" Stimulants of inferior power have little influence over the mind of an Anglo-Indian, whose slumbering energies can only be called forth upon great occasions.

CHAPTER. V.

BERHAMPORE.

In its outward aspect, there is no European station in the Mofussil which can bear any comparison with Berhampore; it is situated on the left bank of the Hooghly, in the fair and fertile province of Bengal, and is arrayed with the utmost splendour of foliage; the flowering trees attaining a gigantic size, and the more common offspring of the forest, the banian, tamarind, neem, peepul, and bamboo, occurring in greater profusion, and seeming to riot in richer luxuriance than in the dry soils of the upper country, where the groves are contrasted with arid sand, instead of springing from long grass and thickly-spreading underwood.

The cantonments of Berhampore are well laid out and handsomely built; the quarters of the officers belonging to the European regiments stationed there being of brick covered with cement, like the *puckha* palaces of Calcutta, and forming uniform ranges of considerable extent. The grand square,

a spacious quadrangle, enclosing an excellent parade-ground, is particularly striking; and stately houses, belonging to civilians and other permanent residents, arise in tasteful and convenient spots in the neighbourhood, giving to the whole station an air of grandeur and importance not usually found in garrisons, where the pompous array of fortresses and bristling bulwarks is wanting. To contrast with all this beauty and magnificence, and to shew the deceitfulness of outward appearances, a large and melancholy arena, filled with monumental stones, gives silent but mournful evidence of the unhealthiness of the atmosphere, and of the grim dominion of Death in the midst of the most lavish productions of nature. Berhampore lies low, and has not been sufficiently drained before its occupation by European troops. Every breath of air which visits it comes over swamps and marshy lands; it abounds with ditches and stagnant pools, those fruitful sources of malaria, and its too redundant vegetation is rank and noisome.

Elegant and commodious as the European quarters appear, they have not been constructed with a proper regard to the health of the inhabitants. It was formerly the custom in Bengal, and one which unfortunately has not been universally relinquished,

to glaze the houses only upon what sailors would term the weather-side; close wooden shutters, or glass doors, not being supposed necessary except to keep off the storms of rain brought by the hurricanes from the north-west. Under this idea, the more sheltered parts of the house are merely furnished with venetians, which never can be made to close so exactly as to keep out the damp air.

There are no fire-places in these summer residences; and persons compelled to dwell all the year round in them must undergo every change of atmosphere, without the possibility of preventing their exposure to diseases which are generated by sudden transitions from heat to cold. Philosophers assert that the earth is cooling down; and although the sultriness of Bengal during the hot season has not suffered the slightest diminution, it is certain that the air is much keener than heretofore during the few months of cold weather: a fact fully borne out by the frosts, which have made ice an article of manufacture at Chinsurah by the same process used in the upper provinces. Every person having more regard to health than to expense, takes care to have the family abode glazed upon all sides, and fire-places formerly unknown are becoming common in Calcutta, where, after sunset, in the large lofty

rooms, during the cold season, the blaze and genial warmth of a wood fire are very acceptable. The want of these preservatives from cholera, which is more frequently brought on by exposure to chills than by any other cause, is severely felt at Berhampore, where that fatal disease is peculiarly destructive to the European community, making sad ravages amongst the King's regiments every season: doleful records upon the tombstones chronicle its gloomy triumphs; neither sex nor age are spared, and there is no cemetery in India which contains the mortal remains of so many juvenile mothers and young brides as that at Berhampore.

The Lower Orphan School, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, receives numerous inmates from this unhealthy station. This institution was established for the purpose of educating and providing for the children of deceased soldiers. Some of its regulations, though judicious, are rather singular. Should the non-commissioned officers or privates of European regiments desire to take a wife out of this asylum, they are, if men of character, permitted to do so, but they must choose by the eye alone at a single interview. They are not allowed to pay their addresses to the object which has attracted them, or to transfer their affections to another after

their selection has been made: no previous acquaintance can be granted, and the bride has only the privilege of rejection.

King's troops, which have nearly completed the full period of their services in India, generally take their leave of Mofussil stations at Berhampore; but it is too often selected for the quarters of new arrivals; and regiments, acclimating in the midst of its treacherous swamps, pay double toll to the king of terrors. Here are no pecuniray advantages which can compensate for an unhealthy climate, and no one takes up his abode at this place without a feeling of reluctance; frequent deaths cast a gloom upon society, and there are other causes which prevent the cordiality and good-fellowship amid the European community, which can alone reconcile the Indian exile to banishment in a foreign land.

The extreme youth of the civil and military servants of the Company, upon their arrival in the country in which their lot has been cast, permits them to conform to its customs without any irksome feeling; but it is otherwise with officers of King's regiments, who come out later in life. Their habits and manners have been formed in England, and many refuse to submit to the regulations and usages which have been established time out of mind in

India, while others comply with an ill-grace. The order of visiting is completely reversed in the Company's territories; the stranger is expected to call upon the residents, and the rule is so absolute, that persons who refuse to attend to it give much offence, and are in a great measure cut off from society. Subaltern officers of small means, unaccustomed to the state of things existing in a strange country, feel reluctant to intrude themselves upon the mansions of rich civilians, and would rather await the advance of the great man; the civilian is offended by the neglect of common courtesy, and, having lived many years out of England, forgets to make proper allowances for the prejudices imbibed at home: coldness and dislike ensue, each casts the blame upon the other, and the station is divided into separate circles.

The difference between the style of living and the incomes of persons thrown together at a Mofussil station is but too apt to create suspicion, if not jealousy, on the part of the least wealthy class. They scrutinize the air and deportment of those more favoured with the gifts of fortune with a critical eye; reserve is always attributed to pride; they expect marked and flattering receptions, without considering that their visits may be paid to men

who, notwithstanding their station or their talents, may be very little acquainted with the world, and quite unskilled in the art of doing the honours of their houses. The shyness and want of ease which would pass unnoticed in persons of their own standing, are imputed to the worst feelings when exhibited by rich civilians: no time is given to thaw the ice; a hasty judgment, in many instances of course exceedingly erroneous, is formed, and the visitor withdraws in disgust, determined never to subject himself again to "the proud man's contumely."

Ladies, happily, are not expected to undergo this ordeal: upon their arrival at a station, the husband, father, or brother, with whom they reside, makes the tour of the place, and the females of the families, to whom he has paid his respects, call upon the strangers, who are of course expected to return the visit. If the duty, in the first instance, on the part of the gentleman, be omitted, the ladies will remain unnoticed, and it will either be supposed that they desire to live in seclusion, or that there is some not very creditable reason for their being averse to an introduction to the society. The awkwardness of presenting themselves at the houses of persons with whom they have not had

any previous acquaintance is considerably lessened when, as is generally the case, the strangers have some friend, well known to the whole station, to accompany them in their round of visits.

It rarely happens that the officers of the native army are without a *Cicerone;* for, immediately upon landing, they are thrown into the way of so many cadets, new-comers like themselves, who, upon their obtaining commissions, are posted into different regiments; and so soon become associated with persons belonging to both services, that, at almost every station, they must have an acquaintance disposed to perform the friendly office. King's troops are differently circumstanced; they have a society within themselves, which they fancy will render them independent of any other. They do not choose to appear to court attentions which they think should be bestowed unsolicited; and if, upon their first arrival in Bengal, they should not be quartered for any length of time at Fort William, they may march up the country without having formed any acquaintance beyond the limits of their own barracks. Officers joining King's regiments long stationed in India generally live for a considerable period isolated from the servants of the Company, unless the corps should have amalgamated

itself with the rest of the Anglo-Indian community, and have got rid of all the opinions contracted in Europe. This is only the case at Berhampore, when its garrison has been recruited from the upper provinces.

A newly-arrived regiment, which had held out staunchly against paying the first visit, and whose officers could not be persuaded that pride was not the cause of their being unnoticed by civilians of rank, was not a little astonished by the conduct pursued by a gentleman, who succeeded to the appointment of resident at the neighbouring court. The individual in question, from long domestication with native princes in distant states, had adopted the pomp and circumstance of oriental splendour, so necessary to create and retain the respect due to the representative of the governors of the country. The appointments of his establishment were magnificent; he kept a train of elephants, and when he appeared in state was surrounded by a crowd of retainers, *chobdars* and *chuprassees*, carrying silver maces and sheathed swords before him, while mounted *sewars* brought up the rear. These things were talked of, and of course exaggerated, in a place which has been too long under the dominion of the Company for

Europeans to be compelled to study the tastes and prejudices of natives of rank, whom it seems to be the policy to instruct in foreign fashions. A demeanour correspondent to all this outward grandeur was expected by the little world of Berhampore; but, to the surprise of every body, the new resident got into his buggy, that favourite conveyance of rich and poor, and left his name at every door without the least distinction. He became of course exceedingly popular, and rational people perceived that, if they had attended like him to the customs of the country, the whole station might have been united, instead of being split into parties.

To a casual visitor, neither the crowded burial-ground, nor the little jealousies existing between certain classes, can seriously affect the pleasure to be derived from a short sojourn at one of the best-built and best-kept stations in India. The roads are exceedingly fine, and there are no squalid and unsightly objects to destroy the effect of the splendid buildings scattered in every direction. The whole place would realize the *beau idéal* which untravelled persons might form of some imperial residence, exclusively confined to the *attachés* of a court in its rural retirement; and when the band of one of the King's regiments is playing the over-

tures of Rossini or of Weber, in a masterly style, at the evening promenade, surrounded by gay equipages filled with ladies attired in the latest European fashions, it is difficult to imagine that the scene is placed upon the banks of the Hooghly, so many thousand miles distant *from* the native places of the music, the glittering paraphernalia, and the assembled crowd. The divine airs of our favourite composers can scarcely be heard to more advantage than when played by accomplished performers, on a fine calm evening, by the side of an Indian river. None, who have ever listened to the strains of harmony waked by skilful hands, while gazing upon the placid waters paved with starry ingots, or silvered over by the moonlight, and shaded with feathery trees, can forget the soothing sensation they produced. The pleasure is too rarely tasted to lose its zest; European bands do not long retain their best performers in India; they have many temptations to indulge in habits of intemperance, and when they drop off, very inferior substitutes must be accepted in their place.

The East-India Company have a manufactory of silk at Berhampore, which furnishes the bandana handkerchiefs so much prized in England, together with taffetas and washing silks, which are

however deficient both in gloss and substance, and very inferior to the productions of other looms, either belonging to the eastern world or to European states; the difference in the price between these articles and richer importations, is not sufficiently great to induce Anglo-Indian ladies to patronize them, even if the prejudice did not run very strongly in favour of foreign goods.

Where China satins are despised, the silks of Berhampore have little favour, and seldom find their way into the wardrobes of the fair residents. Beautiful pieces of workmanship, of various kinds, in carved ivory, are brought for sale from the neighbouring city of Moorshedabad. Though the artizans of the native capital of the province of Bengal cannot support any comparison with the delicate performances of the Chinese, they exhibit considerable skill in the delineations of men and animals, and their figures far surpass the grotesque images which are usually sold in Delhi. The common kinds of chessmen, boards furnished with richly-cut pegs for the game of *solitaire*, paper-presses, and wafer-seals, are exceedingly well executed, and cheap compared with the European prices. It is seldom that there is a large stock upon hand, the manufacturers not liking to work

except by order; nor are these articles purchasable at Calcutta. The natives of India, though industrious and fond of getting money, are not given to commercial speculations; at least, the spirit does not pervade all classes of merchants and manufacturers; and those articles which are not in common demand all over India, are only to be found in the places where they are produced. There is no general mart in Calcutta, where all the different commodities of Hindostan can be procured.

Without visiting every part of India, it is impossible to become acquainted with the numerous branches of art which have arrived at a high degree of perfection in remote native cities; many persons have remained for years in Calcutta without having had an opportunity of seeing articles of manufacture, which are better known in England than within a hundred miles of the spot where they were made. No European shopkeeper at the presidency has yet thought it worth his while to inquire about the productions of the Mofussil, with a view of opening a warehouse for their sale. The success of the Chinese shop on the esplanade offers great encouragement for the establishment of a similar emporium, where persons desirous to send presents to England might see all the resources

of the country at once, and choose from the gold ornaments and embroideries of Delhi, the mosaics, marbles, and agates of Agra, the sweetmeats and pickles of Lucknow, the medicinal oils of Mhow and other celebrated places, the carpets of Mirzapore, the muslin scarfs of Dacca, the ivory works of Berhampore, defensive and offensive arms, with a great variety of other articles, both curious and ornamental, which are scarcely known except by the few who may meet them by accident, in travelling through the places where they are made.

Within seventy miles of Berhampore, and not more than fifty from Calcutta, at Kisnagur, a civil station on the banks of the Jellinghy, there is a manufactory of printed muslins, of a very superior kind, which are not to be met with in the Calcutta market, even when the supply from England is not adequate to the demand. These muslins have the commendation—a strong one to some persons—of being high-priced. The piece, which is more than enough for one dress but not sufficient for two, is twenty rupees (£2). The patterns are elegant, but are only printed in a single colour; and as India muslin, though nearly driven out of the market by steam and spinning-jennies, is still highly-prized, it might be advantageous to an

English shopkeeper to keep a stock on hand for the benefit of the ladies of Calcutta.

At the same place, Kisnagur, poor native workmen have become exceedingly expert in an art, which appears to be of very modern date in India, that of modelling figures illustrative of the great variety of castes and classes of the population of Hindostan. Nothing can be more characteristic, or more skilfully executed, than the countenances; the expression of each is admirable; the water-carrier looks worn with fatigue, while the khansamah bears an air of authority; the lines of care and thought are traced upon the brow of age, and the young seem to exult in strength and vigour. There is the stern determination of the self-torturing *fuqeer*, and the humble insinuating appeal of the common beggar. The attitudes have great merit; but the limbs, though well put together, are not so exactly proportioned as to correspond with the extraordinary degree of perfection to which the heads have been brought, the hands in particular being usually too large. The figures are, in the first instance, composed of rags and straw, covered with a coating of cement: from their weight and appearance, they convey the idea of images formed of finely-tempered clay; but as they are easily frac-

tured, a slight accident will reveal the nature of the materials. These figures, which cannot be copied in England, except at a great expense (it being necessary to take casts from the originals,) are sold at Kisnagur and Calcutta, where they are also manufactured, at eight annas (a shilling) each, dressed with great accuracy in the proper costume, but in coarse materials. Any number may be procured, and it is only necessary to tell the artist that you require representations of nautch girls, musicians, tailors, or fifty others; they are all brought, and all equally true to nature.

The amusements of Berhampore are considerably increased by its proximity to Moorshedabad, a city which, after the desertion of Dacca by the imperial soubadar, became the capital of Bengal, and which is still the residence of the pensioned descendant of its former rulers. The domini[on] which Jaffeer Khan, the founder of the family the nawáb of Bengal, maintained against the [w]of the Moghul emperors, who vainly attempted [to] persede him, faded away after the famous [fi]t Plássey: not a single vestige of power now re[m]and the princes of the present day are [re]duced support an outward show of magnificence [on] income of sixteen lacs (£160,000) a-year

them by the East-India Company. The city is well-situated, and forms a pleasing object from the river, but contains nothing worthy of notice, except the modern palace of the nawáb, which is a fine building, in the European style, of dazzling whiteness, and rising in glittering splendour amid stately groves of flowering trees. All the Mohammedan festivals are celebrated with great pomp, under the superintendence of a prince who has little else to divert his mind; and as the invitations are very generally extended to the European residents of Berhampore, they have ample opportunities of studying the character of native entertainments. Deference to European taste has occasioned those at Moorshedabad to be of a mixed character; the nautch is frequently performing in one apartment while quadrilles are going on in another, and the style of the banquet is entirely adapted to the peculiar notions of the guests.

The intercourse which has taken place between the nawáb of Bengal and his Anglo-Indian neighbours, has not, up to the present period, been productive of the same salutary effects, which in so many instances have followed the intimacies of European and Indian residents in Calcutta. Though not destitute of talents, and apparently exceedingly

willing to accommodate themselves to foreign customs, to live in European houses, and to drive about in European carriages, none of the descendants of the dethroned Meer Jaffeer Khan have been distinguished for literary or scientific attainments, and the late nawáb* was lamentably deficient in every branch of education. It is, unfortunately, the policy of the relatives of natives of rank to enervate the mind of the heir of the family by frivolous and ignoble pursuits; this system, in the instance above mentioned, was carried to a fatal extent. The young prince was handsome, graceful in his person, and courteous in his manners; he never neglected to bow to European ladies when he met them in the evening drive, whether he had been previously presented to them or not, paying that mark of respect indiscriminately to every carriage which contained a fair tenant.† It was impossible, however, for Europeans, who had any respect for themselves, to take the slightest pleasure in the

* The *Asiatic Journal* has lately announced the death of this prince, who fell an early victim to a career of vice and intemperance.

† European ladies sometimes complain that they are not treated with sufficient deference and respect by Asiatics of rank.

society of a man wholly given up to dissipation of every kind. The interchange of visits was rendered imperative by his rank and situation; but his presence never could be productive of gratification. When partaking of the hospitalities of the judges of the court of circuit, or other distinguished Europeans, at whose tables he did not sit as a mere matter of form, according to the strict rules practised by persons of his religion in India, he speedily became intoxicated by too frequent libations of that beverage, in which lax Mohammedans permit themselves to indulge, since it does not come under the denomination of wine. Cherry-brandy is the favourite juice of the jovial portion of Moslems and Hindoos; even the lofty-minded Rajpoots, the strictest followers of Brahma, who in their central provinces have not been so strongly exposed to the contaminating influence of European example, will condescend to imbibe long potations of this fascinating *liqueur*, and under its influence become, in an exceedingly short space of time, as they term it, *burra coosee* (very happy).

Upon some occasions, the Nawáb of Bengal appears upon the river in state, and the effect of his numerous and brilliant flotilla is the finest imaginable. The prows of these gay and gilded barges

are shaped into the resemblance of animals, and painted and varnished with all the hues and splendour of enamel; at the stern, gilt pillars support richly-embroidered canopies, and the rowers are splendidly clad in white and scarlet. The boats are exceedingly long, and as they skim like bright-plumed birds the surface of the sparkling water, the delighted spectator feels assured that the silver Cydnus never bore a fairer fleet. The great men who follow in the nawáb's train, are magnificently clad in gold and silver brocade, studded with jewels; the punkahs and umbrellas, which are used to agitate the air and screen them from the sun when landing, are formed of rich materials, and there is not, as in other native processions, any mixture of poverty or meanness to mar the gorgeousness of the spectacle.

These regattas are seen to the greatest advantage in the rains, when the Bhagarathi—the name given to the arm of the Ganges, which branches off from the parent river, about forty miles above Moorshedabad,—is very wide, spreading itself over a vast extent of low ground, and forming beautiful creeks and bays shadowed with the bending branches of the bamboo and other graceful trees. Nor is it by day alone that the river is made the scene of those

pageants, which in India supply the place of dramatic spectacles. An annual *fête* takes place at night, under the auspices of the nawáb, which is scarcely to be paralleled in beauty. It is instituted in honour of the escape of an ancient sovereign of Bengal from drowning, who, as the tradition relates, being upset in a boat at night, would have perished, his attendants being unable to distinguish the spot where he struggled in the water, had it not been for a sudden illumination caused by a troop of beauteous maidens, who had simultaneously launched a great number of little boats into the river, of coco-nut garlanded with flowers, and gleaming with a lamp, whose flickering flame each viewed with anxious hopes of happy augury. The faithful followers of the king, aided by this seasonable diffusion of light, perceived their master just as he was nearly sinking, exhausted by vain efforts to reach the shore, and guiding a boat to his assistance, arrived in time to snatch him from a watery grave. It is said that it is in commemoration of this fortunate escape that the annual festival of the *Bhearer* is celebrated; some, however, attribute its origin to a different circumstance: whatever may have been the motive of its institution, they are fortunate who have had an

opportunity of witnessing a scene which transports the spectator to fairy land.

The natives of India are extremely ingenious in all the decorative parts of art, and frequently astonish those who consider their taste as perfectly barbarous by the display of undoubted elegance in their devices. Talc, which is found in great abundance in India, supplies the material for numberless brilliant illusions: the splendid *tázees*, carried about at the Mohurrum, are chiefly composed of the shining and transparent plates of this mineral, which may be cut into any shape, and made to assume all the colours of the rainbow. When illuminated by the profusion of lamps which are always brought in aid of any midnight exhibition, the effect is perfectly magical.

The banks of the river are brilliantly lighted up on the evening of the festival of the *Bhearer*, and numerous flights of rockets announce the approach of a floating palace, built upon a raft, and preceded by thousands of small lamps, which cover the surface of the water, each wreathed with a chaplet of flowers. The raft is of considerable extent, formed of plantain trees fastened together, and bearing a structure which Titania herself might delight to inhabit. Towers, gates, and

pagodas, appear in fantastic array, bright with a thousand colours, and shining in the light of numberless glittering cressets.

Two angles in the river only admit a transient view of the passing pageant; there is no time to detect the human hand in its erection, or to doubt that fairy spells have been at work: amid the blaze of rockets, which reveal nothing but its beauties, the clang of innumerable instruments, and the animated shouts of thousands raised to the highest degree of excitement by the interest of the scene, the splendid fabric disappears, and the river is left to its own placid beauty, the sky to its lonely stars, and the atmosphere around to those splendid meteors which brighten the evening air in Bengal. The fire-fly is rarely to be seen above Benares, where it does not appear in the countless myriads disporting through the fields of heaven, but in the lower and more marshy provinces, it becomes one of the most beautiful adjuncts of an Indian night; and is seen in great abundance in the neighbourhood of Moorshedabad, where the trees are literally radiant with lamps on every leaf.

It may be supposed that when the festival of the *Bhearer* is celebrated with so much pomp, the custom to which (whatever may be its origin) it

bears so strong an affinity, is very prevalent. Though occasionally on the Jumna, and on the higher parts of the Ganges, the fairy boat, with its garland and its light of good or evil omen, is to be seen, the stream is not lit up, as in Bengal, with numerous barks of hope, which float after each other of an evening in rapid succession, nor is the native attachment to flowers, though extending to every part of Hindostan, so strongly displayed in any other province.

In addition to the gaieties and festivities which take place at the palace of the nawáb, the residents of Berhampore avail themselves of the opportunities of enjoying field sports, afforded by the adjacent country. The Rajmhal hills arise on the opposite bank of the river, and thither parties of gentlemen are continually attracted by the exciting warfare which Anglo-Indians delight to carry on against the beasts of prey infesting the jungles of India. Numerous wild animals, of the most savage description, abound in the sunny dells and shady thickets of the extensive mountain ranges, which divide Bengal from the neighbouring province of Behar.

The rhinoceros is an inhabitant of the woods of Rajmhal, and though of too sullen and cruel a

character to become domesticated or useful to man, when taken young may be permitted nearly the same liberty of action as that with which the elephant in the Zoological Gardens is indulged. An enclosure of not very large dimensions, but in which there is a spreading umbrageous tree, and a small muddy pond, in Barrackpore Park, contains one of these huge unwieldly animals. The creature is apparently well-satisfied with its condition, wallowing for half the day in the mire, and spending the remainder under the sheltering boughs of its leafy canopy. It does not display any anger or impatience at the approach of visitors, and gazes unconcernedly at the carriages which are continually passing and re-passing the place of its confinement, which, for the convenience of those who may wish to see it without much trouble, is close to the public road. This extraordinary animal is rarely seen in Europe; a young one, captured a few years ago, which was intended for an English menagerie, unfortunately perished in consequence of the miscalculations of the natives to whom it was entrusted. As they learned that there would be some difficulty in procuring proper food for their four-footed companion, in one stage of their journey to Calcutta, they crammed it with three

days' provision at once, and it died of repletion, a contingency which never occurred to men who can endure the extremes of abstinence or of excess without sustaining much personal inconvenience.

Those huge ferocious bears, which form such conspicuous inhabitants of European menageries, and which in their native haunts are not less formidable than the tiger, stalk in horrid majesty through the woods of Rajmhal: one of the tribe was formerly to be found in the collection at Barrackpore Park, which contained specimens of the most interesting animals in India; but the present Government, too economical in its arrangements to sanction an expense of five hundred rupees per month, the cost of the establishment, gave away birds and beasts without remorse, and though not at the trouble of taking down the buildings, which are tasteful and well-constructed, has permitted them to fall into decay. The niggard parsimony pursued in this instance must always be a subject of regret to those who are interested in the study of natural history. Had the menagerie been kept up a few years longer, there can be little doubt that, besides the gratification which it afforded to visitants from the presidency and the neighbouring

cantonments, it would have become an emporium for the supply of England, since it would have been always easy to fill up the places of those animals which should be sent to zoological societies at home. There would have been no kind of difficulty in procuring the most rare inhabitants of the peninsula of India, since, had any desire been manifested on the part of the government to render the menagerie complete in all its departments, every civilian in the service would have been happy to take advantage of the opportunies afforded by his situation, and the ready aid given by the natives to any thing which the judge or collector may choose to undertake, to furnish the collection with such wild animals as were known to exist within the limits of his jurisdiction.

Very rare and beautiful animals may frequently be purchased in India at reasonable prices. A pair of the small Nipal cattle, the Yak, which furnish those long silky tails, so distinguished an ornament of every native court, and which when converted into *chowries* are always thought worthy of being affixed to handles of solid silver, were offered for sale by the proprietor for three hundred rupees. The tails form an article of commerce in great demand, but the animals which supply them are sel-

dom seen upon the plains of India, as they will not live through the heats of the sultry months. The introduction of the breed in England, therefore, would not be difficult, and as an ornamental appendage to a nobleman's park, they would be invaluable. Not one amid the numerous varieties belonging to their species can compare in outward beauty to those lovely little animals; they are exceedingly well-shaped, and their coats, jet black, and shining like satin, are contrasted with a pure white bushy tail, long, soft, and wavy. The pair above-mentioned were carried to Gwalior, the officer to whom they were offered being deterred from making the purchase, on account of the difficulty, in the existing state of things, of having them properly taken care of in Calcutta, or of making arrangements for their being shipped for England. The heat of the voyage would in all probability have been fatal to these animals, which could only be conveyed in safety by way of the Red Sea, and through the Mediterranean.

The sunny regions of Rajmhal are particularly favourable to the growth of snakes; all the venomous kinds thrive in a congenial soil, and the boa-constrictor attains a size unknown in other parts of the continent of India.

It has been already remarked, that a very sensible change has been experienced in the four months of cold weather, which affords so seasonable a relief to the overpowering heat of Bengal; and as by experiments, made at Chinsurah, it is now supposed that ice may be obtained by the method employed in the upper country, those who are of opinion that an expensive freezing apparatus is necessary for the manufacture, may feel desirous to learn the common mode in use all over India.

At the principal stations in the Mofussil, there are regular ice-harvests; the night-frosts during a certain number of weeks being always sufficiently strong to congeal water exposed to their influence, if of an inconsiderable depth. A piece of ground, commensurate to the number of persons who subscribe to the concern, is laid out for the purpose of collecting a sufficient quantity of ice to last through the hot season; shallow pans are provided, of convenient dimensions, and these are placed in rows, close to each other. After sunset, they are filled with water by superintendants, whose business it is to remove the cakes when sufficiently frozen, and to replenish the pans; an operation which is performed several times in the course of each night. The cakes of ice are deposited in excavations made

according to the principles observed in England, and with proper care may be preserved during the rains. The least neglect, however, is fatal in the damp season; the ice melts in an instant, and the unfortunate subscribers, instead of having the stipulated quantity to cool butter, cream, jellies, water, and wine, are compelled to do as well as they can with the only substitute, saltpetre.

Artificial ice, made by the assistance of an air-pump and other machinery, has been found too expensive, and is seldom or never resorted to in India: upon its first introduction into Bengal, the novelty proved very attractive, and a rich and luxurious native, it is said, expended seven hundred pounds in the single article of ice at an entertainment given to a European party.

At Chinsurah, where the frosts are not so severe as in the upper country, a small quantity of saltpetre is placed in the pans, and should the season prove favourable, the necessity of importing ice from America will exist no longer.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAVELLING:—THE MARCH.

In peaceable times, the period chosen for the general movement of troops in India is at the commencement of the cold season; but as many regiments are obliged to wait until they are relieved by others, the hot weather often comes on before the whole of the army on the move can be settled in new quarters. Officers rejoining their corps, or proceeding to different parts of the country upon leave of absence or military duties, are continually traversing the plains and jungles of India, even at the least favourable seasons, having no habitations save a tent; and if travelling alone, no society excepting that of their own servants and the wild tenants of the wood. Persons, however, who can amuse themselves, prefer the solitude to which they must be condemned in their progress from station to station, to the inconveniences attendant upon the movement of large bodies, and the necessity of a strict observance of the rules and regulations laid down by the commanding officer.

Unless under some very peculiar circumstances, a regiment is usually stationary for three years in the quarters assigned to it; the breaking-up of an establishment, therefore, after so long a residence, is often a serious affair. In many places, bungalows are not to be obtained on hire; they must be purchased from the proprietors, and upon a change of residence sold to the new comers. If there should not be a sufficient number to accommodate the whole of the strangers, those who have not succeeded in procuring a house must build one, and live in their tents until it shall be finished. Great losses are frequently sustained in the fluctuations of society in a small station. An officer who has been compelled to pay a very high price for a bungalow, when houses happen to have been in great demand, may be obliged to sell at a very low one, or have the tenement left upon his hands at his departure, in consequence of a diminution in the number of the residents.

In places where natives are induced to build bungalows upon speculation, and to let them out by the month (the usual period for the hire of every thing in India), there is much less trouble and anxiety in changing the place of abode, though it is still a formidable affair. All the accumulations

of furniture not actually necessary for the march are sold off, sometimes as a matter of pure necessity, to procure funds to meet the expenses of a removal, or to lessen them by abridging the number of conveyances. At others, the sales, so frequent all over India, seem to be occasioned by a peculiarity of disposition common to the British community resident there,—a passion for buying and selling,—since, in merely changing house, or removing to a very short distance, many persons will take the opportunity of having an auction, and of parting with all their goods and chattels without reserve, although they must commence a repurchase almost immediately.

The roving Arab of the desert cannot entertain less attachment to household conveniences than an Anglo-Indian, and if one person should happen to take a fancy to the effects of another, he may be very certain that a little patience will afford him the option of bidding for them at the outcry,* which will assuredly take place in the course of a few

* This is an Anglo-Indian word, which is preferred to the common appellation. To go to an 'outcry,' or to send goods to an 'outcry,' is understood by the initiated to mean an 'auction;' and *Griffins*, who do not comprehend the term, are looked upon with great contempt.

months. There are a few exceptions, chiefly in the cases of ancient civilians, who allow their chairs and tables to grow old in their service; but the mania appears to be extending, and when these worthies shall have retired from the scene, their successors will doubtless follow the prevailing fashion, and sell off at every decent opportunity.

One cause of the shifting nature which property has assumed in India proceeds from the difficulty of preserving any perishable article from the injurious effects of the climate, and the depredations committed by winged and four-footed assailants. Constant care and attention are required to keep furniture in decent order. No packing will secure iron from rust, wood from ants, or cotton, canvas, and leather from rats: tents laid up in ordinary are eaten through and through; boxes and trunks drop to pieces, and are found to be nests of reptiles of every kind; one article has been split in the hot winds, another has got mouldy in the rains, and insects have penetrated every where. If the furniture and other effects belonging to a family going to the hills, or to the presidency for a few months, should be left standing in a house, there is still danger from the habitual neglect, or occasional remissness of the servants who may have the care of

them: indeed, constant use seems to be almost essential to their preservation. The house itself, also, if uninhabited, will speedily fall into disrepair, and therefore, even where a short absence is contemplated, it is thought more advisable to sell every thing off, than to risk the destruction of property from the numerous adverse influences in continual and active operation.

Accustomed to constant sales and transfers of worldly goods, many persons will part with all their household effects without any adequate cause, not even retaining their plate, which they must sell at a disadvantage, and which may not be in sufficient quantities to be any serious encumbrance; but where there are few modes of beguiling time, a sale affords a degree of excitement, and though the amusements of an auction-room are monopolized by the gentlemen, it not being reckoned decorous for females to attend, the ladies are interested in the affair, and look over the marked catalogues brought to them with eager eyes, speculating upon the causes of suspicious purchases, a piano-forte, for instance, by some apparently determined bachelor, which perhaps turns out to be a commission from a married friend, or expensive articles by families who can ill afford the luxuries of life.

An auction is the inevitable result of a death. A wife losing her husband, breaks up her establishment immediately; a husband, losing his wife sells off all the superfluous furniture, and not unfrequently the ornaments and wardrobe of the deceased; while the executors of a bachelor, either appointed by will or by the existing regulations, collect every article of his property and put the whole under the hammer. The eve of a march is fertile in sales, the purchasers being the more permanent residents, shop-keepers and not unfrequently natives, who take the opportunity of procuring articles of European manufacture at a cheap rate: they are beginning, even in the Upper Provinces, to keep English carriages, and are if possible less particular than the Anglo-Indians respecting the external appearance of the equipage, being quite content with rat-eaten, worm-eaten vehicles, which have had the greater part of the paint and varnish rubbed off in rude encounters with enemies of various kinds.

Upon a march, a certain quantity of furniture must be reserved from the general sale, or purchased for the occasion, since it is not possible to proceed without a supply of domestic utensils sufficient for the comfort and convenience of the travelling party. Many persons pitch their tents, and

live in them for a week or two, previous to their final retreat from their old quarters; thus accustoming themselves to the change, and seeing that they have every thing requisite for a long journey. At day-break, on the morning appointed for the commencement of the march, the bustle and confusion of departure begin; the *cortège* of every family spreads itself wide over the plain, presenting motley groupes of various kinds.

Chests and other heavy goods are packed in *hackerys* (small carts drawn by bullocks), and where there are ladies, a conveyance of this nature is secured for the female attendants: other bullocks have trunks, made purposely for this mode of transportation, slung across their backs; the tents become the load of camels, or an elephant, and light or fragile articles are carried either on men's heads or over their shoulders: nothing that will not bear jolting being entrusted to four-footed animals. The china and glass are packed in round baskets, and conveyed by *coolies* on their heads; looking-glasses, *chillum-chees* (brass wash-basins), and toilette-furniture, are tied upon a *charpoy* or bedstead, and carried by four men, and cooking-pots, gridirons, frying-pans, chairs, tables, stools, and bird-cages, are disposed of in a similar manner. The *meter*

appears with his dogs in a string or strings; the shepherd drives his sheep before him, and cocks crow and hens cluck from the baskets in which they are imprisoned; spare horses are led by their *syces* or grooms, who never mount them, and the washermen and the water-carriers are there with their bullocks. The head-servant, or *khansamah*, seldom compromises his dignity by marching on foot, but is generally to be seen amid the equestrians, the steed being some ragged, vicious, or broken-down *tattoo*, caprisoned *à la Rozinante:* the other domestics, *khidmutghars*, bearers, &c. either walk, or bestride the camels, if their drivers will permit them to mount, or take a cast in a hackery, or get on in any way that happens to present itself. All are well accustomed to the mode of travelling, and proceed with cheerfulness.

The master of the family, if with his regiment, must be on horseback, unless the commandant should be sufficiently indulgent to permit him to drive his wife in a buggy. The lady sometimes rides an Arab steed, and sometimes travels in a close carriage, or a palanquin, according as inclination or convenience may direct; the children, if there be any, are usually inclosed with their attendants in a peculiar kind of vehicle, called a palan-

quin-carriage, but different from those used by adults, and not very unlike the cage of a wild beast placed upon wheels. The nurse sits on the floor of this machine, with a baby upon her knees, and the larger fry peep through the prison-bars of the clumsy conveyance, which is drawn by bullocks, and moves slowly and heavily along, floundering over the rough roads, and threatening to upset at every jolt. The passage of such a cavalcade through the country is very amusing, but *griffins* only are seen to laugh at the droll appearance made by this gipsy mode of travelling; the natives are accustomed to it, and the immense multitude (the regiment itself scarcely forming a third part) move along without molestation, and with comparatively little difficulty, in consequence of the few enclosures which impede their progress.

The train of a family, amounting to three persons, will not consist of less than a hundred individuals, the wives and children of the servants included, who not unfrequently carry their aged parents along with them. The native officers belonging to sepoy regiments have their zenanas to convey, and few of the sepoys themselves are entirely destitute of attendants. Then there is the bazaar, which is invariably attached to a camp, to

supply it with all the necessaries of life, and men, women, children, and animals abound in this ambulatory market for gram, ghee, flour, tobacco, spices, &c. When spare tents have been sent on, the family of an officer, on arriving at the encamping ground, find every thing ready for their reception; but if any accident should have retarded the route of the people, a tree must be the resource. Parties may be seen on horseback, or on foot, or in palanquins, grouped under the shade of some friendly bough, waiting while their canvas abode is preparing for them.

The rapid manner in which the multifarious materials which are to compose the temporary city are reduced to order, and arranged in their proper places, is truly astonishing. It is both curious and interesting to watch the progress of the formation of a camp, from some neighbouring bungalow, when it occurs in the vicinity of cantonments. The desert appears to be peopled as if by magic; men and animals crowd upon the scene; the earth in every direction is strewed with uncouth packages and bundles; these amid much gesticulation, and no small expenditure of lungs, assume graceful forms, and arise glittering in the sun like the pavilions of some fairy princess. Long lines of pent-

house streets appear; banners are floating in the air; the elephant, who has trodden out the ground and smoothed it for his master's tent, retires to his bivouac, and spacious enclosures, formed of *kanauts*, secure the utmost privacy to the dwellers of the populous camp. The exertions of a little army of followers have succeeded in imparting comfort and even elegance to interiors fitted up in haste in the midst of the wildest jungle. Palanquins and carriages begin to arrive; the ladies find their toilette-tables laid out; the gentlemen are provided with a bath; the *khidmutghars* are preparing breakfast, and the *hookahbadars* are getting the *chillums* in readiness; while camels, bullocks and their drivers, tent-pitchers, coolies, and all those who have been employed in fatiguing offices, are buried in profound repose. The sheep are lying down to rest, and the poultry are more peaceable than usual.

It is at these times that a kind master is rewarded for his attention to the comfort and well-being of those beneath him, by the devotion manifested by his servants. It seems to be a point of honour amongst faithful and respectable domestics to prevent their employers from suffering inconvenience or privation of any kind, while exposed to the dif-

ficulties which must necessarily occur upon a line of march. They will, upon such occasions, voluntarily perform duties not properly belonging to their respective stations in the household. They will assist with heart and hand upon any emergency; help to get the tent up, or to extricate the cattle and the baggage, should either stick fast upon the road; cheer and animate the exertions of others, and think their own credit is concerned in procuring all the wonted enjoyments of a permanent home.

Where the head of the house has failed to secure the attachment of his dependants, he is made to feel how completely it is in their power to avenge themselves. They can always invent some excuse for the carelessness and neglect which are productive of serious annoyance to him. He has no remedy; for, accustomed to beating and abuse, they are not deterred, by fear of the consequences of his displeasure, from preferring their own ease to his comfort. They have little hope of good treatment, and are determined not to allow any opportunity for retaliation to escape them. He may awake in the morning and find that the whole set have abandoned him in the night, and in this event he is left in the most charming predicament imaginable, and

can only vent his rage upon the awkward substitutes which the neighbouring village will supply, who, in turn, run away so soon as they can take their departure without danger of pursuit.

In parts of the country abounding in game, the sportsmen are scarcely settled in their quarters before they prepare to take the field. Their horses have been sent on over-night, and as the grand objects of the chase, the wild boar and the tiger, are not hunted with dogs, they have only themselves and their cattle to put in order. Tigers can rarely be approached except upon an elephant; for, independent of the danger to the rider, few horses could be induced to face these terrific animals. But well-mounted, and with spear in hand, a bold equestrian dashes forward on the scarcely less perilous pursuit of the bristly monsters of the plain.

The dresses of the hunting party are various and characteristic; many old sportsmen array themselves in long flannel jackets, descending nearly to the saddle; they render their passage through jungles, overgrown by the prickly pear, easy, by encasing their knees in thick leathern caps, and they preserve their heads from too close a contact with mother-earth, (a hard parent in a conker soil,)

by fastening a black or rather brown velvet jockey-cap, duly fenced with armour of proof in the inside, under their chins. Younger and gayer Nimrods appear in smart hunting-coats of scarlet or Lincoln green, with fashionable corded inexpressibles and top-boots; while tyros, eager for their first field, and unprovided with appropriate garments, exhibit in their accustomed suit, white jackets and trowsers, exceedingly ill adapted for the fell encounters which await them. Altogether, when thus equipped, the party, attended by the numerous followers which a hunting match is sure to attract, make a gallant shew, and set forward high in hope and in spirits.

The return, though less splendid as regards the personal appearance and the habiliments of the cavalcade, is more imposing from the blood-stained trophies of the chase, brought in by an exulting band, who fight the battle o'er and o'er again. Some of the party are covered from head to foot with the mud of a marsh, in which they have been unceremoniously deposited; another re-enters the camp upon a tattoo, having left his best charger a victim to the murderous tusks of a desperate assailant; one has descended to the depths of an old well, and his chum has unwittingly explored the

secret recesses of some ravine, treacherously concealed by brushwood and long grass. But where no more serious accidents have occurred to mar the triumphs of the day, the quarters of the slain, cooked to perfection by some liberal Moosulman,* are enjoyed without alloy at the tables of the camp; the ladies partaking in the excitement of the morning's sport, and the luxurious fare it has produced.

In well-regulated camps, the utmost quiet is maintained throughout the night, until the sound of the bugles long before day authorizes the striking of the tent-pins. Sleep is effectually banished by that dreadful note of preparation, and, starting from their slumbers, the European inhabitants make a hasty toilette, and superintend the irksome task of repacking those small and valuable articles essential to their comfort, which they are afraid of entrusting to other hands.

The necessity of rising every day at a certain hour, and of performing certain duties, whether the health and spirits be equal to them or not, is a great drawback to the pleasures of a march, to those who are not strong enough to cope with

* They are bigots and pretenders solely, who object to handle the flesh of the hog in any state, cured or fresh. An orthodox believer has only to wash his hands and to repeat a prayer, to purify himself from the defilement.

hardships which, though trifling in themselves, become distressing by their diurnal occurrence. To an invalid, it is desirable to make a bed of a palanquin, as in that case the noise around, to which a traveller will soon become accustomed, forms the only disturbance; the bearers take up the vehicle, and the period of rising is postponed until the close of the morning's journey. There are always *doolies* (palanquins enclosed with cloth curtains) belonging to the hospital, in readiness for the officers or sepoys who may chance to be taken ill upon the road; but, notwithstanding the strict precautions which are observed to prevent disagreeable consequences from such accidents, in long and difficult marches delicate persons are sometimes exposed to fatigues and hardships of a very serious nature.

A lady, travelling in a palanquin, relinquished it for the accommodation of her husband, who was seized with an attack of illness at too great a distance from the hospital conveyances to avail himself of them. The lady ventured to perform the morning's journey in the *hackery* which conveyed her female attendants, and, after suffering a martyrdom from the jolting of the vehicle, had the misfortune to be overturned upon the banks of a *nullah*. This accident obliged her to wade through the stream

with her women, and to walk afterwards a distance of three miles in her wet clothes, at the risk of catching a fever: fortunately, no dangerous consequences ensued; but the bare idea of such a pilgrimage, amidst the wastes and wilds of an Indian jungle, must be terrifying to those who are acquainted with the effects which too frequently follow from exposure to the sun. Gentlemen seldom attempt to walk to any distant point without having a horse or a palanquin behind them.

The dinner in camp is usually as well supplied with the products of the larder, as the repast served up in a settled establishment. Several very excellent dishes have been invented, which are peculiarly adapted to the cooking apparatus suited to a jungle or some unreclaimed waste hitherto unconscious of culinary toils. A *Burdwān* stew ranks high amongst these concoctions, and two sauces which go under the name of *shikārree* (hunters') and camp-sauce, are assuredly the most piquant adjuncts to flesh and fowl which the genius of a *gastronome* has ever compounded. Immediately after dinner, the *khidmutghars*, cooks, and *mussaulchees*, pack up the utensils belonging to their department, and set forward with the tent, which is to be the morrow's dwelling, leaving the bearers

to attend at tea, or to furnish the materials for a stronger beverage for the evening's refreshment: their objection to the table-service extending only to repasts composed of animal food. By these arrangements, the chances of being obliged to *bivouac* for hours under a tree are considerably lessened; but where no second tent can be afforded, the travellers must inevitably acquire experimental knowledge of the delectabilities of living in the fresh air.

A young officer attached to the rear-guard, in coming late into camp, hot, dusty, and wearied to death, has occasionally the mortification of seeing his tent struck, by order of some rigid Martinet, perchance a temporary commandant, dressed in a little brief authority, who has discovered that it is not in its proper situation: another site is to be found; meanwhile, like Jacques, "under the shade of melancholy boughs," he takes a gloomy aspect of human nature, or if unused to the pensive mood, devotes the ruthless author of his misfortune to Zamiel, or some such classic personage. He has, in all probability, risen long before day-break, has performed the first part of his morning's duties shivering with cold, pierced through and through by the keen blasts of a cutting wind, though for

the last four hours, his exposure to a burning sun has enabled him to compare the miseries of Nova Zembla with those of an Indian desert; and, unless from downright exhaustion, he has little patience left to await the time in which he may hope to stretch his aching limbs beneath the shelter of a tent.

Occasionally, during a long march, it is necessary to halt for a day or two upon the road, in order to refresh the weary frames of men and cattle toiling under the burthen of the camp equipage. The close vicinity of a large station is most frequently chosen for this sojourn, as it enables the officers to replenish their stock of European supplies. The camp on these days presents a busy scene; the *dobies* seize the opportunity to wash and iron their masters' clothes; mending, making, and repairing of garments, saddles, harness, and tackle of all descriptions, take place, and if there has been a fall of rain, the wetted articles are dried in the sun. Should the station be celebrated for its gaiety, invitations for a ball and supper meet the regiment upon the road; something like a sensation is created by the prospect of entertaining strangers, and the officers of the corps marching through, are not unwilling to diversify the monotony of a camp by

entering into the festivities of a social cantonment. Sometimes the march is less agreeably retarded by a change of weather.

When the breaking-up of the rains is protracted beyond the customary period, those regiments first appointed to take the field, are exposed to the torrents which invariably mark the closing of the season. An Indian tent is so constructed as to keep out any ordinary quantity of water that may be showered upon it, but it cannot withstand a deluge; trenches are dug round to prevent the accumulation of pools and puddles on the floor,—too frequently an useless attempt, for when the canvas roof has been thoroughly soaked through, there is no possibility of keeping the interior dry.

A wet camp is the most deplorable of all wretched places; groupes of miserable creatures huddle themselves together under some inefficient shed; coldness and discomfort reign in every part; there are few fires; the wood is wet and will not burn; the cooking-places have been washed away, and still the flood pours down, giving no hope of abatement, no chance of dinner and dry beds. Happy may those persons esteem themselves who have palanquins or close carriages to repair to in these melancholy circumstances; they at least afford a refuge

from the pelting rain, and biscuits and brandy supply the place of a regular meal. Three or four days of such weather prove a trial of strength and patience, which requires a more than ordinary portion of mental and bodily endurance to support: invention and ingenuity are taxed to the utmost for the means of existence for those delicate sufferers, ladies and children, who are compelled to bear the buffetings of the storm. At length, the sky clears up; men and beasts, looking more than half dead, emerge from their dripping lairs; fires are kindled upon the first dry spots, and gradually, under the vivifying influence of the sun, partial comfort, at least, is restored to the tents. There is no such thing as stirring during the continuance of the rain, and the dreadful state of the roads, cut up in every direction, will offer many impediments to the march, which must be renewed as soon as it is practicable to proceed.

A more common and more bearable misery sustained in a camp is caused by the strong winds, which sweep across the plains of Hindostan in the cold season. When these are very violent, although the tent may withstand their power, and maintain its erect position, it is impossible to keep out the dust: it makes its way through every crevice, and

becomes at length an almost intolerable nuisance. But a canvas habitation is not always proof against a tornado: neither ropes nor pins can avail when the tempest lets loose all its force. The cordage cracks, the pins are torn up from the ground, away rolls the tent, demolishing in its progress the furniture it contained, and enveloping those unfortunates, who may not have made a timely escape, in clouds of canvas.

Long marches are, however, often performed without obstruction or accident of any kind; and it is very practicable to traverse the country in the rains, when they do not come down absolutely in torrents for days together: at least, a distance of a hundred miles may be compassed without much difficulty, especially as, in short marches, two stages may be performed at once without distressing the people or their beasts of burthen.

After a tedious sojourn in the jungles, an invitation to spend the season at a large station induced the writer and another lady to make an attempt to cross the country in the midst of the rains, escorted only by servants, and a guard of sepoys. We took twelve camels with us, and loaded them lightly with a couple of tents, it being necessary to make their burthens as little

oppressive as possible. In order to guard against the uncomfortableness of sitting on damp earth, we had a wooden platform constructed, raised two inches from the ground, which our *dobee* afterwards secured for an ironing-board, and we took care to be well supplied with setringees and small mats. Our train consisted of a *khansamah*, who had the direction of the whole journey, three *khidmutghars*, a *sirdar-bearer*, the tailor, the washerman, the water-carrier, the cook and *mussaulchees*, twelve bearers for each palanquin, and *claishees* (tent-pitchers), *banghie-bearers* and *coolies* almost innumerable. Our two female attendants travelled in a hackery, with a favourite Persian cat, which seemed to be the most discomposed of the whole party by the journey. Our *cortège* preceded us by a day, and were directed to push on to a place about six-and-twenty miles distant. We followed before day-break the next morning, and, though many parts of the country were flooded, and our progress was necessarily slow, reached our little encampment before one in the day, having had no rain, and experiencing only trifling inconvenience from the heat.

Our people had chosen a very picturesque spot, having pitched the tent in front of a small

mango tope, opposite to a well, which was shaded by a magnificent tamarind-tree. An old Moosulman city, formerly a place of considerable importance, reared its time-worn walls to the left; while to the right, a rich tract, beautifully wooded, and decked with silvery lakes, stretched itself as far as the eye could reach. The city proved a very interesting object to strangers, who had hitherto only surveyed the towns of India from the rivers; it was surrounded by high battlemented walls of dark red stone, flanked with solid buttresses, and seemed to have been a place of great strength in other days. The fortifications had fallen to decay, and through gaps in the upper part of the massy walls the domes of mosques were visible, while here and there an open cupola reared its head, the decoration apparently of some wealthy native's mansion. A large archway, furnished with strong wooden gates, gave glimpses of the principal street; and the peaceable occupations of the inhabitants, and their songs, which came in snatches on the breeze, harmonized soothingly with the calm aspect of the scene.

Our four-and-twenty bearers, the instant they had given up the charge of the palanquins, flung themselves down upon the ground, and fell fast

asleep; but the rest of our people were busy, some cooking their own meals, and others preparing for our refreshment. We found the tent furnished with a couch to repose upon during the day, and our breakfast *à la fourchette* was served up in excellent style: it was followed by an early dinner, and we were amused by the packing and departure of our second tent, with the party attached to it. The men girded up their loins, rolled their trowsers above their knees, and taking large staffs in their hands, set forward with an air of great resolution: the *khansamah*, as became his dignity, being mounted upon a tattoo, which seemed rather in a crazy condition; the women disposed themselves in their hackery, and we were left to the care of our sirdar-bearer, a couple of sepoys, and three *chokeydars* from the neighbouring city. We chose to make beds of our palanquins, which were brought into the tent, and the sirdar-bearer laid himself down in front, apparently unwilling to allow his charge to be out of his sight. He brought us tea at starting, and we proceeded very early in the morning, not expecting to see him or the tent again, as we had made up our minds, in consequence of having received letters urging despatch, on account of a ball which

was to take place in a few days, to wait at the houses of the *thannadars* of the villages while our bearers took their needful rest, rather than lose the expected gratification by lingering on the road. Our servants, with whom we could have very little oral communication, on account of our ignorance of Hindoostanee, were aware of our intention, through the medium of an epistle in Persian, forwarded to the *khansamah*, of which he seemed not a little proud; and the sirdar, who had never shewn much activity or energy before, performed wonders in the display of his gratitude for the remarkably easy life which he had been allowed to lead.

It was twelve o'clock before we reached the tent, which had been sent on, and which we found pleasantly situated near a pagoda, and where we received a visit from a respectable person, handsomely attired, who made his *salaams*, and gave us to understand that he had been directed by the district judge to afford us every accommodation in his power. After partaking of a repast, in which the grilled fowl and chicken-broth were excellent, at four o'clock, our bearers being refreshed, we went on another march, and, to our surprise and pleasure, found the tent which we had left in the morning, ready to receive us. The sirdar must

have broken up his encampment the instant we left it, and have gone forward without waiting to rest upon the road. He had fortunately chosen the close vicinity of a *serai* for our night's sojourn, since the clouds, which had hitherto befriended us, had now gathered in a portentous manner, and the rain soon began to descend in heavy and continuous showers. Our people found shelter in the before-mentioned *serai*, a handsome stone quadrangle, which we had had an opportunity of reconnoitring before the rain came on, and were therefore easy upon their account. The *khansamah*, who shortly afterwards arrived with the second tent, could not be prevailed upon to remain, but went off again almost immediately, being determined not to be outdone by the sirdar: he must have had a weary march of it, for the night was dreadfully dark, and the waters were out all over the low grounds. Another *thannadar* made his appearance, and earnestly recommended us, in consequence of the state of the country, not to depart before day-light; we took his advice, and prepared to spend the intervening hours as agreeably as the circumstances would admit. Our tent was impervious to the weather, and, were it otherwise, we could not get wet in our palanquins.

We had been advised that no baggage would be safe which was not under the immediate charge of a sentinel. It is the custom to pile every portable article on the outside of the tent, close to the guard; but as we feared they would not be water-proof, we had our trunks brought under cover, and directed the sepoy to enter the tent, and keep watch over them there. Our faithful sirdar took up his usual post by the side of the palanquins, and a *chokeydar* established himself at every opening. The tent was lined with dark cloth; a single lamp shed its solitary ray over the sleepers and the guard, and as I looked out upon the strange group with whom I was so closely associated, the *coup-d'œil* reminded me of a scene in a melodrame, representing a robber's cave.

We recommenced our journey on the following morning, in the midst of heavy rain, and made little progress through the floods, which had considerably increased since the preceding day. Our bearers seemed much distressed, and we were glad to allow them to rest occasionally: they were not unmindful of our comfort, but, when refreshing themselves, brought milk to the palanquin-doors, which we very thankfully accepted, as we had not provided ourselves with bottles of tea. About the

middle of the day we came up to the tent, which we quitted before night, as we found that relays of bearers had been engaged to carry us on to the place of our destination, which we reached at an early hour on the following morning. An invitation awaited us to dine at four o'clock with a friend in the neighbourhood: we dressed and went, not expecting to be attended by our servants at table; but shortly after the commencement of the meal, all the *khidmutghars* made their appearance, attired in their best clothes, and not evincing any marks of fatigue from the extraordinary exertions they had made.

During the whole of this journey, we were strongly impressed with a feeling of gratitude and good-will towards the natives of India, who, upon all occasions, manifested an anxious desire to assure us of their respect and attachment. The highly civilized state of the country, and the courteous manners of all classes of the people, render travelling both easy and agreeable to those persons who are contented with the performance of possibilities, and who are not inclined to purchase an ill name by acts of tyranny and oppression.

In the cold season, the civilians of India often realize those exquisite dreams raised by the charm-

ing pictures of the wood of Ardennes, in Shakespeare's enchanting delineation of sylvan life. They frequently live for weeks together "under the green-wood tree," a merry groupe of foresters, not even encountering an enemy "in winter and rough weather," for the finest period of the year is chosen for their visits to remote parts of the districts, and the climate is of the most desirable temperature: clear sunny skies, attended by breezes cool enough to render woollen garments, and the cheerful blaze of a fire essential to comfort. Upon these occasions, large parties are invited to accompany the judge, or the collector, who, while he is engaged in business at his temporary kutcherry, amuse themselves with hunting, shooting, or playing at golf. Ladies are always ready to accompany their male relatives upon these excursions; they are glad to exchange the strict formalities of some dull station for a social circle composed of picked persons, bent upon enjoying any pleasure that may offer, and anxious to meet each other every day, and all day long.

Double-poled tents, thickly carpeted, and containing numerous apartments, furnish all the luxuries of a settled home in these gay *pic-nics*, which afford the best display of the grandeur and magni-

ficence of India which the Asiatic style of living can produce. It is peculiar to the country, and could not be surpassed by a congress of princes meeting in the open field. A guard of mounted *suwars*, a train of elephants, and studs of horses of the finest breeds, are amid the most splendid accompaniments of the gorgeous tents, which spread their light pavilions under the embowering trees. The servants are all in their richest attire, and in such vast numbers as to appear like the myriads conjured up on the green sward by the magician of some fairy tale.

A youth of a vivid imagination can scarcely be persuaded that the romantic scene before him is not a fanciful creation of the brain, a dream of enchantment from which he must awake to sad and sober reality. Notwithstanding the evidence of his senses, it is difficult to convince him of the possibility of the actual existence of so much elegance and refinement in the centre of moss-grown rocks and apparently interminable forests; he is full of doubt and wonder, now delighted with some incident of savage life,—the rousing a huge elephant [illegible] and now solacing himself with the latest importation of Parisian perfumery, or the pages of a fashionable novel. His apartment is furnished with

all the luxurious appendages which modern art has invented; his breakfast consists of delicate viands, exquisitely cooked; and after a day's delightful sport, rendered still more exciting by exposure to danger, perils faced and overcome, he returns to a lighted apartment, spread with a noble banquet, and filled with a charming assembly of graceful women, with whom, for the rest of the evening, he enjoys sweet converse, or listens to still sweeter songs.

The ladies have their full share of the pleasures of the sylvan scene, and the unmarried females are doubly dangerous when appearing in the shape of wood-nymphs: many a determined bachelor has surrendered his heart to the fair one who has smiled sweetly on the tiger-cub snatched by his daring hand from its enraged mother, and has made so great a pet of it, that he cannot bear to part them, or to leave her with so dangerous a playmate. There is no ball-room flirtation half so hazardous to bachelorhood as the attentions which gentlemen are called upon to pay in the jungles of India; and could the dowagers of a London circle contrive [illegible] propinquity for their daughters, the grand business of their lives would be achieved without further trouble or anxiety.

The wealthy natives, in the neighbourhood of a

moving *kutcherry* or court, anxious to pay their respects to the great man who is at the head of it, make their appearance in the encampment, with all the pomp they can muster. In former times, when presents were permitted, the ladies had shawls and pearl necklaces laid at their feet, whenever a rajah or a nawaub approached them. Those golden days are over, and the communication between natives and Europeans has sustained a shock, in consequence of the total abolition of all *nuzzurs*. The natives are unwilling to present themselves without making some offering, however trifling, which they have been accustomed to consider a necessary mark of respect. It is in vain they are assured that they will be as welcome as if they came loaded with gifts; they cannot be persuaded to appear empty handed, and the poor man, who saw his little offering of fruit or vegetables graciously received, now does not like to intrude upon the presence of his superior, though perhaps it was the pride of his heart to make his weekly salaams to the *saib*.

A dangerous vicinity to the fiercer tribes of wild animals does not deter ladies from accompanying their husbands or brothers in the tour of the district: no wildernesses less dreadful than the melancholy wastes of the Sunderbunds can appal their

adventurous spirits. There the solitudes are too awful, the dominion of beasts of prey too absolute, and the *malaria*, arising from unreclaimed marshes and impenetrable woods, too perilous to be encountered by any person not compelled by duty to traverse the savage scene. Attended only by a few natives, whose services are indispensable, the civilians, whose appointments lead them to spend a part of the year in this desert spot, wear out the time not devoted to business in perfect loneliness. They describe the early *réveille* of the fierce denizens of the woods, the wild cries of the birds, the deep roar of prowling beasts, and the sullen echoes from rock, ravine, and morass, as awe-inspiring, even to accustomed ears; and no splendour of scenery, no luxuriance of vegetation, can reconcile them to an abode so completely usurped by tribes inimical to man. But, in less dreary scenes, troops of gay chasseurs live merrily "under the blossom that hangs on the bough;" their pleasures are enhanced by the news that a tiger stalks in the surrounding jungle, or that the rhinoceros, or the wild buffalo, has made his lair in the long grass. Their spears and rifles make deadly havoc amid these horrid monsters; the camp at night is blazing with fires, and the cattle secured by temporary stockades. The

ladies sleep securely in the tents, and the servants are safely disposed between the outer and inner *kanauts*, which, the walls and roofs being double, form covered passages all round.

Few accidents occur where proper precautions have been taken; a sheep is sometimes carried off, and a party locating in the Rajmhal hills, rather surprised and somewhat alarmed by the constant visits of tigers, discovered that they had pitched their camp upon the track made by these animals to the Ganges, and had, in fact, established themselves upon one of the great thoroughfares of the brute nations around.

CHAPTER VII.

PATNA.

PATNA is the first native city of wealth and importance passed by the voyagers of the Ganges, on their way to the upper country. It stands on the right bank of the river, in the province of Behar; and here the marshy soil of Bengal is exchanged for the arid sands of Hindostan: camels seldom penetrate farther, and from this point the hot winds cease to be felt; those which blow in the damp atmosphere of Bengal not being worthy of the name. The thermometer may be equally high, but the heat outside the house is more supportable, and the disadvantage of which many complain, arising from the uselessness of *tatties*, is counterbalanced by the pleasures of the evening drive. As soon as the sun has set, it is practicable to go out; whereas, in the plains of Hindostan, the air does not become cool until the night is far advanced.

Patna, though it does not contain any single building of great celebrity or peculiar beauty, is

rich in the remains of Moosulman splendour, and its appearance from the river is highly picturesque. The houses of the wealthy classes, which are very numerous, are handsome buildings, flat-roofed, and surrounded by carved balustrades. Many are of considerable extent, and, though exhibiting the usual symptoms of neglect, when seen from a distance make a good appearance. The intermixture of these residences with peepul trees, broad ghauts the remains of Gothic gateways of dark red stone (which possess a truly feudal air), and the numerous temples devoted to Hindoo and Moosulman worship, produce a striking effect; and when the river is full and brimming to its banks, turret, spire, and dome being reflected in its broad mirror, the *coup-d'œil* is exceedingly imposing.

Patna cannot fail to excite a strong degree of interest in a stranger's breast, since it is a scene of one of the gallant Clive's heroic actions. It was here that, seated on a gun, weary and battle-stained, he surprised his native allies by his treatment of his prisoners. Instead of the immediate sacrifice, which they confidently expected, they saw him anxious to console the dejected captives for their disastrous defeat, and beheld the French commander, whose valour and talents had for so long a

period threatened the downfal of British dominion in the East, become reconciled to life by the noble demeanour of his generous enemy. The tardy justice rendered to Clive cannot satisfy the minds of those who have traced him through the scenes of his extraordinary career. Destined for mercantile pursuits, he became a soldier at the call of danger, and paused not upon his adventurous course until he had secured some of the fairest provinces of India to the British crown. The annexation of Patna to the Company's territories rendered the subjugation of the upper country comparatively easy, for after this brilliant achievement, the dream of future conquests might be freely indulged.

Upon its first subjection to the Company, the city of Patna became the residence of the civilians employed by the Government: but it has long been abandoned, in consequence of a treacherous attack made upon them by Cossim Ali, at the instigation of a low German whom he had taken into his service, and they have now established themselves at Bankipore, a convenient spot by the river's side, a short distance beyond the suburbs. The houses of the numerous civil servants of the Company who belong to the Behar district, are built in the style of those of Calcutta, and are chiefly *puckah*; many

are very stately edifices, having broad terraces overlooking the Ganges, and being surrounded with luxuriant plantations.

The situation of Patna possesses many advantages. Being placed on the border of Bengal, it commands an easy communication with the upper and lower country; supplies are procured from Calcutta, by the river, in a few weeks; and the earliest choice of articles may be obtained from the cargoes of vessels bound to more distant stations. Books and English newspapers do not become stale before their arrival; and the inhabitants, keeping up a more regular intercourse with Europe, are not so entirely dependent upon the Indian press for intelligence from home as those attached to more remote stations, where the loss of boats laden with new publications, and the detention of files of London journals, soon weary and disgust persons not gifted with an extraordinary degree of patience. The civilians of Bankipore have also the opportunity of seeing and entertaining all travellers of consequence proceeding up or down the river, and their appointments, though clipped and curtailed, being comparatively liberal, they are enabled to keep up a portion of the ancient hospitality. The society in every part of India must always be sus-

ceptible of great fluctuation; but so extensive a district as Behar, cannot, at any period, fail to possess a very fair proportion of the talent and intelligence of the country. It is not, therefore, surprising that the head-quarters, Bankipore, should always be distinguished for the intellectuality and elegance of its principal residents.

The establishment of a lithographic press, through the spirited exertions of Sir Charles D'Oyly, to whose taste for the fine arts the scientific world is so deeply indebted, is alone sufficient to render Patna a place of no ordinary interest to travellers in search of information. The vicinity of the province of Behar to the Rajmhal hills, and the still wilder ranges of Nepaul, has enabled a circle of amateurs to collect specimens of the rarest and most beautiful natural productions of the East. A work upon ornithology, which issues regularly from the Behar press, contains coloured drawings from living subjects of the most interesting individuals of the feathered tribe to be found on the continent of India. Such pursuits must necessarily tend to improve the taste of those who are so fortunate as to be thrown into the society at Bankipore: a talent for drawing, one of the most useful accomplishments in India, may be cultivated to the

greatest advantage under the auspices of the directors of the press, and there can be no more effectual preservative from the *ennui* of some stations, and the dissipation of others, than the direction of the mind towards useful studies connected with the history, natural or political, of the country.

The military cantonments of Dinapore are only a few miles distant, and at favourable periods contribute not a little to the gaiety of the district. This distinction must always be made in commenting upon the society of Mofussil stations; for the individuals composing it are frequently so exceedingly perverse, that it is impossible to persuade them to coalesce in any plan of amusement. Gentlemen, after having been at all the expense attendant upon giving a ball, are sometimes compelled to divert themselves in the best manner they can devise, without the assistance of their expected partners, all of whom, in consequence perhaps of some trifling pique, have sent excuses at the last hour. The supper, under these circumstances, forms the only consolation, and the fair absentees are doubtless remembered in the libations which ensue. Ladies have also been known to retreat *en masse* from a dinner party, to be succeeded by dancing, offended by the smell of cheroots proceeding from

a neighbouring apartment. The consternation of the host, upon seeing the drawing-room deserted, and the whole of the fair *cortège,—palkees, taun-johns*, chariots, &c. in full retreat from the compound,—may be imagined: the beloved cheroots, however, remain to reconcile the beaux to their loneliness; and it is much to be feared that, in nine cases out of ten, the lady would be voluntarily sacrificed for the cigar. This highly-esteemed preparation of tobacco has nearly superseded the use of the far more elegant hookah; it is not at present tolerated in female society, but the struggle between the rival attractions will be great, and the victory on the side of the ladies extremely doubtful: many devotees preferring banishment from the tea-table to the temporary suspension of their favourite amusement.

The garrison of Dinapore is commanded by a brigadier-general, and in addition to the native force it is usually the station of one King's regiment; but being subjected to the abhorred operation of half-batta, these quarters lie under a ban, and are associated in the minds of all military men with every thing that is hateful. The cantonments are handsome and well laid out, and the performances of the military bands in the evening, upon

the parade-ground, attract the whole population to the spot, affording a cheerful place of assembly, which is wanting at Patna, where there is no rallying point, and where the carriages take different directions in the evening-drive. Dinapore has the advantage of its neighbour in the beauty of the surrounding country; it is better wooded, and more picturesque; but it may be said with truth of almost every part of Hindostan, that the face of the country bears two aspects, being exceedingly ugly in the dry season, and very beautiful in the rains. Bengal, on the contrary, is always green, and its appearance is not improved by the inundations of the rivers and the dilapidations caused by cataracts descending upon houses not furnished with proper channels for the conveyance of the water. From a projecting spout on the roofs, whole sheets come down, which are driven by the wind against the walls, and leave large green stains, while shutters and lattices, despoiled of all their paint, groan and creak upon the rusty hinges.

There are portions of the suburbs of Patna, particularly the view from a Moosulman cemetery of considerable extent, which to unprejudiced eyes are exceedingly interesting; but persons who have resided for a long period in India, and have seen its

finest features, will not admit an inferior landscape to possess a particle of merit; while others, disgusted with the country, deny its claim to admiration altogether. No person should halt at Patna without paying a visit to this lonely burial-ground, which, excepting at one season of the year, is left to perfect solitude. It is a large oblong quadrangle, surrounded by various buildings at unequal distances from each other, some being handsome houses, furnished with double tiers of verandahs, erected for the reception of guests and spectators during the solemn festival of the Mohurrum; others of more ancient and solid construction, towers and gateways of dark red stone, reliques of the days of Moslem glory, when the Moghuls swayed the land down to the very mouths of the Ganges. This singular scene, in its tenantless seclusion, conveys the idea of a deserted city to the musing spectator, for the tombs which it contains, occupying a remote corner, are not sufficiently numerous to indicate its true object and design. It overlooks a vast extent of flat country, which during the rains is covered with broad shallow lakes, which lose themselves in deep dark forests, forming an appropriate back-ground: and here buffaloes are seen wallowing in the marshes, an animal which

always gives a wild and even doleful appearance to the landscape. Viewed under the crimson grandeur of the setting sun, the scene is awe-inspiring; and, as the gloom increases, and the last red gleam dimly illumines the long square, the imagination may easily conjure up the spirits of the dead, the rulers of other days, called from their graves by the hated presence of their pale conquerors from the west.

But this cemetery displays a stirring and magnificent spectacle during the annual imposing ceremonies of the Mohurrum.* Patna is a strong-hold of Mohammedanism, and the disciples of the prophet who dwell within its walls, are described as being far more fanatic and intolerant than their brethren of Bengal, who have sadly degenerated from the true faith, and are given to pay homage at idol shrines. The riches of the city enable it to celebrate the obsequies of the young martys, Hossein and Houssein, in a very splendid manner; and this noble square is selected for the final depository of the *tuzees*, or tombs, which are carried about in commemoration of the funeral honours paid by the followers of Ali to his slaughtered sons. The whole population of Patna, Moslem, Christian, and

* A subsequent chapter will contain a more detailed account of this interesting festival.

Hindoo, assemble to witness the procession. Persons of rank are accommodated in the houses beforementioned, whose roofs are crowded by immense multitudes. Great respect is paid to the Christian spectators, not only on account of their position in the country, but because it is believed that persons of their persuasion remonstrated against the cruel persecution of the young princes by the disciples of Omar. The whole square rings with shouts of "Hossein! Houssein!" accompanied by deep groans and beatings on the breast, while amid the discharge of musketry, the last sad scene is enacted by groups personating the combatants of that fatal battle in which Hossein perished. Whenever the venerated martyr is beaten to the ground, the lamentations are redoubled, many being only withheld by force from inflicting desperate wounds upon themselves. Woe to any of the followers of Omar who should dare to intrude upon the mourners; the battle is then renewed in earnest. Whole companies of sepoys have been known to engage in deadly combat with each other, and numerous lives are lost in the revival of the old dispute respecting the claims of the sons of Ali, in opposition to those of Omar, who represents himself as the adopted heir of the prophet. It requires the utmost vigilance on the

part of the magistracy to prevent the recurrence of bloodshed in the fierce collision of contending parties at Patna during the festival; the Moosulman population of that place being more turbulent and arrogant, and, as it has been already remarked, more bigoted, than those of any other city belonging to the Company's territories. Even the mild Hindoos are not very governable upon these occasions.

The enormous wealth of Patna is probably the chief cause of the pride and insolence of the inhabitants. Many of the great men of the city are exceedingly rich; and at a *durbar* held by Lord Amherst, on his way to the upper provinces, one of them offered, and it is said gave, a lac of rupees to have his name inserted at the head of the list of native gentlemen who paid their respects to the Governor-general on that occasion: the consequence which this precedence would ensure him amongst his own people being well worth the money bestowed upon it.

Patna carries on an extensive trade, and is famous for its manufactories of table-linen and wax-candles. It also possesses very expert workmen in every department of mechanical art; amongst the minor branches are bird-cages, constructed with great ingenuity and even elegance; the frames of some

being delicately inlaid with ivory, while the wires of others are strung with coloured beads. The natives of India of all ranks are fond of keeping birds as domestic pets; and at the proper seasons, persons go into the hill-districts for the purpose of collecting the rarer sorts, which are carried about for sale to all parts of the country. The beautiful little *avadavats*, or *lālls*, as they are commonly called by the natives, on account of their bright ruby colour, are in great request; these, together with many other kinds, are easily procurable at Patna; where also may be found bears, and the fiercer inhabitants of the hills, in a state of captivity. This city is a grand mart for opium, that precious commodity which enriches so many of the native agents, who, as they wax wealthy, live in the style and assume the title of nawábs. The soil is favourable to the growth of potatoes, a vegetable which is much cultivated for native consumption in India; but the London traders, who recommend their rice as the true produce of Patna, are in error in vending the grain of superior quality under that name. Rice is chiefly grown in the low marshy tracts of Bengal, and it is not extensively cultivated any where else: nor does it constitute the food of the people of Patna,

who substitute cakes made of flour as the accompaniment of their *kaaries;* it is dear, on account of its being brought from a distance, and in the upper provinces only appears upon grand occasions at the tables of the lower orders, who are exceedingly economical in their mode of living, and to whom the bazaar-prices are affairs of the greatest importance.

The streets of Patna can only be traversed on horseback, or upon an elephant, being too narrow to admit of any wheel-carriage superior to the native *rhut*, a creaking, nodding, nondescript vehicle, in which the ladies of the country, concealed from public view by thick curtains, huddle themselves when they travel or pay visits. The best houses face the river; many of these have a dismal appearance on the side of the street, shewing only a high blank wall, perforated with a few small windows in the upper story; a free circulation of air apparently not being considered essential to health or comfort. Other mansions are enclosed in large walled courts; and in passing along the principal street many porticoes are visible, peeping out of recesses or small quadrangles, which seem to be the entrances to stately buildings belonging to people of rank. The houses tenanted by the middling

classes are exceedingly crazy, and have somewhat of a Chinese air, each story lessening in size, and standing in the verandah of the one below. They are removed, according to the Indian custom, a little from the public path, crowded during the day with men and animals (horses, buffaloes, bullocks, camels, and goats), by being raised upon a platform about a foot high from the street. The houses occupy the centre of this platform, a margin being left all round, which sometimes stretches beyond the verandah, and forms a shelf, or counter, on which the goods of the inferior shopkeepers are displayed in baskets, none of the richer and more elegant articles being exposed to public view in India. The shops of the *hukeems*, or apothecaries, make the best appearance; they are furnished, in the primitive style, with herbs of various kinds, neatly arranged, and reminding the stranger of the descriptions given in some of the histories of London of the ancient state of Bucklersbury, when simples formed the stock in trade of medical practitioners.

Amid much that is unsightly, there is a great deal to admire in the long avenue which stretches from gate to gate of the city, every few yards bringing some picturesque object to view; lofty

open cupolas, in the most elegant style of Moghul architecture, surmounting handsome mosques, are contrasted with solid towers of the dark-red stone, which seems to have been the favourite material in former times. The houses built for the accommodation of the English residents, on the first occupation of the city, now long deserted and falling into decay, have a singular and melancholy appearance Their construction, after the European fashion, shews that they were destined for foreigners; and their desolation recalls to the mind the tragic fate of those who trusted themselves to a hostile race, smarting under the recollection of recent defeat.

A large piece of ground, consecrated and converted into a Christian cemetery, spreads its grass-grown mounds in the midst of the dwellings of the heathen and the unbeliever, and is still the burial-place of those who have the misfortune to die within the reach of its doleful precincts. The crowded charnels belonging to the Christian community of India are usually sufficiently dreary to fill the breasts of the living with horror and disgust, but that of Patna asserts a painful pre-eminence over all the rest; and if the dead could feel discontented with the place of their interment,—a fact supported

by ghost-stories of great authority,—they would assuredly arise from graves dug in this unhallowed spot, and flit and gibber through the streets: a most effectual plan to rid themselves of their Pagan and Moosulman neighbours, who are exceedingly superstitious, and refuse to enter dwellings which have the reputation of being haunted.

Those who are willing to brave the dirt and heat of a closely-built city, may find much amusement in an evening's visit to Patna. The streets are crowded to excess, the whole male population swarming out to enjoy the dust, or assembling in the verandahs to smoke their hookahs, while gazing on the scene below. Native *palkees*, *taunjohns*, and *rhuts*, force their way through masses of men and boys, the attendants being little scrupulous about the manner in which they clear the avenues for their masters' equipages. Nothing in India can be done without noise, and the din of the passengers is increased by the cries of *chokeydars*, and the incessant vociferations of *fakeers* stationed at the corners of the streets. The shops are all lighted up, and as the evening advances, the dusky buildings which rear themselves against a dark blue sky studded with innumerable stars, have a solemn and imposing appearance; much that is paltry and sordid is ob-

secured in deep shadow, and only the more prominent objects are revealed to the eye. Patna at this time assumes a gorgeous aspect, presenting a succession of temples and palaces worthy to have been the abodes of the luxurious Moghuls.

The city is not often honoured by European visitors, who seldom approach it except upon duty. When there is no particular object of celebrity to attract attention, Anglo-Indians, either from contempt or apathy, rarely enter the native towns in their neighbourhood; few take any interest in the study of Eastern manners, and they are, generally speaking, so careless of pleasing or offending the people amid whom they reside, that however respected the government may be for its good faith and wise ordinances, its civil and military servants can scarcely fail to be exceedingly unpopular in their private and personal character. Intercourse with foreign nations has not yet had the effect of softening and polishing the manners of our proud and disdainful islanders, who usually contrive to make themselves hated wherever they go. The gracious example of a few distinguished individuals, whose courtesy has endeared them to all ranks and classes, is unfortunately disregarded by the majority of British residents in India.

On the opposite bank of the river, at Hadgeepore, a fair is held annually, which attracts a vast concourse of people, both native and European, to its festivities. Duty carries some of the civil servants to the scene of action, and others proceed thither in order to recreate themselves, during a brief period, with the amusements which the assemblage of families from various parts of the country seldom fails to occasion. The fair takes place at a convenient season, the commencement of the cold weather; the visitors, who carry their own habitations with them, pitch their tents on the plain, and when there is a full attendance, form extensive camps; natives and Europeans of course occupying places distinct from each other. Fancy balls and private theatricals constitute the principal amusements of the latter, neither being the less entertaining on account of the contrivances necessary to enable the persons engaged in them to support fictitious characters in appropriate costume. An impromptu masquerade in a desert, is one of the most amusing things imaginable; and in the unwonted activity which it produces, and the astonishing degree of ingenuity which it brings forth, the Anglo-Indians appear to the greatest advantage. The actual fair is of course a very secondary object; they, how-

ever, who have enough cash to make extensive purchases, may provide themselves with the richest productions of the East,—shawls, pearls, gold ornaments, and precious stones. Many of the tents are extremely splendid, those of the wealthy natives, in particular, being profusely bordered with scarlet cloth, cut into fanciful patterns. The double-poled tents of the civilians are scarcely, if at all, inferior in their external decorations, and the interiors are furnished with great elegance. Rich carpets are spread over the *setringees* which cover the floor, and small chandeliers are suspended from the roofs. The walls are hung with some gay-patterned chintz, and the sideboards glitter with plate. No privations are felt by the dwellers under canvas; the repasts are equally well served in the midst of a sandy waste as in the kitchen attached to a magnificent mansion.

The evening scene is highly picturesque; all the cookery, for men and animals, native and European, is performed in the open air, and innumerable fires are kindled for the purpose in every direction. Round some may be seen the turbaned attendants of great men, preparing their master's meal; others, very scantily clothed, bend their swart faces over the cauldrons which contain their

vegetable stews, appearing, as the flickering flame ascends, like demons superintending some infernal beverage. In one place piles of flat cakes, called *chupatties*, rise, on which the elephants, for whom they are intended, look with approving eyes; and in another, a servant stands guardian over the dishes of *kaarie* which are cooling for the dogs. Some groupes are sleeping, some smoking, others singing and beating the *tom-tom*, while gaily-dressed ladies are alighting from their carriages, and entering the tents already illuminated for the evening.

There is no uncertainty of climate in India to derange the measures taken to secure the comfort of a camp, during the proper season for living *al fresco;* but when necessity obliges parties to betake themselves to their tents at a less favourable period of the year, they are subjected to a variety of accidents of a very formidable nature. On one memorable occasion, the officers of a regiment, compelled to perform a long march at a time in which variable weather might be expected, were desirous to give a dinner to another corps in a similar predicament, who crossed them on their road. Preparations were made upon a grand scale; the presiding *khansamah* did his best, produced his choicest stores of European luxuries, and committed great

slaughter amongst the sheep and poultry. The roasts, boils, grills, and stews, were of the most approved quality, and as usual, in quantity superabundant. Every thing promised fair for such an entertainment as never fails to gladden the heart of an Indian *maître-d'hotel*, who, though he would not, upon any consideration, taste a single drop of the gravy which his art has concocted for an European table, surveys with pride and exultation the long array of dishes which he has provided for his master's guests.

Just as the dinner was taking up, lo! a sudden and most tremendous hurricane swept over the plain, burying fires, pots, pans, and eatables in one wide waste of sand. The distraction of the servants at this unexpected catastrophe is not to be described; vehement in their gesticulations, some beat their breasts, others tore their hair, while the more collected secured the joints, sole wrecks of a splendid dinner. The sand had penetrated every where, inundating the soup-kettles, and enveloping the grills; the only resource was to pare off the outsides of the ham and the legs of mutton, and these mutilated relics were placed upon the board by the crest-fallen *khansamah*, who, having got over the first burst of his despair, gravely informed

the hungry guests, gazing upon the empty space before them, that "it was the will of heaven that they should go without their dinner." Fortunately, he had to deal with reasonable men, who did not expect him to contend against the elements, and he experienced only the mortification attendant upon unsuccessful efforts. Such accidents as this rarely occur, even in the worst seasons; for when there is any warning of an approaching storm, the servants always take precautions for the security of the viands, and in the rains, they not unfrequently wade knee-deep through water, with smoking dishes on their heads, from the cooking-place to their master's table.

A description of Patna, however slight and superficial, would be exceedingly incomplete unless some mention should be made of a very interesting place in the neighbourhood, Deegah Farm, the extensive establishment of Mr. Havell, who conducts his business upon a scale of magnificence which is unequalled throughout India. There is a class of Europeans, settled at the principal stations, who style themselves "provisioners," a name very expressive of their occupation, and of these Mr. Havell is at the head. His large and beautifully-kept farm-yards are stored with all sorts of domes-

tic animals, and his pigs in particular are far-famed; they are of Chinese and English breed; for, though the wild boars of the jungles are supposed to yield the finest pork in the world, the tame variety, fed upon offal by the lowest castes in India, are an abomination to Christian eyes, and Europeans will not taste the flesh unless they are certain of the pedigree and education of the animal that supplies it, lest they should partake of a part of the long-legged bristly-maned monster, who they, as well as their Moosulman servants, look upon as an unclean beast. Mr. Havell's pigs had the honour to detain the most distinguished personage in India from the expectant garrison of Dinapore, drawn out to receive him. After waiting for several hours in the sun, the sepoys, who do not comprehend the distinction between pigs of quality and those of plebeian origin, were not a little amazed and scandalized when they saw the great man ride up in his deshabille, and understood that he had been solacing himself in the pig-sties of Deegah, instead of appearing, at the appointed time, in full costume before the troops anxiously desirous to catch a glimpse of the *Burra Saib*.

Mr. Havell's warehouses are kept in the nicest order, and exhibit a multifarious variety of articles,

properly classed and arranged. Jewellery and millinery, china, glass, hardware, European bird-cages and bird-seed, saddlery, ornamental furniture, foreign fruits, jams, jellies, and preserves, with an endless *et-cetera* of good things for the table. He also deals in carriages and horses, wine, beer, and spirits; in fact, every thing requisite for a liberal establishment is to be found in some of the various departments of this immense concern. Mr. Havell's boats go down to the Sand Heads, at the mouth of the Hooghly, to catch the mango and hilsa-fish, which, after being properly cured, are despatched to every part of India; his humps, his chetney, and his sauces, form a portion of the exports from Calcutta to London; and hams, bacon, and hung beef, prepared at his farm, are highly esteemed even by those who are apt to fancy that nothing of the kind can be excellent which does not come from England. The gardens of Deegah are most beautifully planted and laid out; they contain an immense profusion of European flowers, which attain to great perfection, while those of the country, together with every kind of fruit, from the superiority of the cultivation, are infinitely finer than the productions of gardens less skilfully managed. The native *mallees* are under the superintendence

of Dutch and Chinese gardeners, men of science and practical knowledge; and a residence at Dinapore would be desirable, were it only for the great advantage to be derived from frequent visits to the beautiful parterres which embellish these extensive pleasure-grounds.

Mr. Havell resides in a very handsome house upon his farm, and the strand below is a favourite halting-place for budgerows proceeding up or down the river. Travellers are anxious to supply themselves with live and dead stock from so celebrated an emporium, and all who touch at Deegah experience the obliging attentions of the proprietor, finding as long as they remain in the neighbourhood, the various conveniences of so well-conducted an establishment at their disposal. All are invited to walk in the gardens, and those who are not provided with carriages or palanquins, are offered conveyances to and from Dinapore. Their tables may be furnished from the cook-room of the mansion, and baskets of fruits and vegetables accompany the purchases despatched to the boat. Pleasant are the recollections of Deegah, with its talking-birds in cages, its groups of camels, the first that the writer had seen in the country, and its English

flower-beds, shewing how bright a paradise an Indian garden may be made by practised hands. The prices of the articles sold by Mr. Havell are necessarily extremely high, it being impossible to support the expence of so large an establishment upon moderate profits. During a great part of the year, there are a thousand persons employed in the different departments of this concern, and the wages of these people must amount to an enormous sum. The farm has risen and flourished during the period of splendid government allowances, but whether it can continue to make adequate returns under the cutting and clipping system, must be extremely doubtful. There is very little encouragement for trade in a country where so few persons possess incomes large enough to allow them to indulge in the luxuries of life, and there is but too much reason to apprehend that, at the death of the present spirited proprietor, Deegah will dwindle and fall into decay.

Farms upon a similar, but more limited plan, are common all over the country; one at Cawnpore, in particular, conducted by Mr. Dickson, is deservedly celebrated. The vineyards attached to this establishment are the finest in India, and from their pro-

duce the proprietor has succeeded in making wine, quite equal in richness and flavour to that of Constantia. The quantity which the presses have hitherto yielded has not been sufficient to enable Mr. Dickson to supply the market, but the experiment has proved, beyond a doubt, that if the growth of the vine was encouraged in India, it would furnish the country with wines not inferior in strength and quality to those of Europe.

In India the vine is trained over square pillars of brick, connected across the top, about a foot distant from each other, and formed into long arcades: the masonry of these supports ought to be extremely solid, for in gardens where care has not been taken to keep them in repair, they are in great danger from the *tufauns* which prevail during the hot winds. Just as the clusters of fruit are ready for the knife, a sudden outbreak of the tempest frequently levels the whole vineyard with the ground; the grapes lie crushed under the fragments of the walls, and where the harvest promised fairly, a few bunches will alone remain unspoiled.

At the period of the vintage, the plains of Hindostan resemble one large hothouse; and this burning atmosphere seems particularly favourable to the vine, which, at Agra, whither it was trans-

planted from Persia by the Moghuls,* and where it is left to the care of inexperienced natives, comes to great perfection. Attention to the soil and culture would doubtless improve the quality of the produce, and this, in the first instance, must be effected by European residents; for where nature has done so much, the Indians themselves are content with its provisions, and think any extra toil an act of supererogation. If, however, they should discover a source of profit in the sale of wine, they would speedily make themselves acquainted with the necessary process; for though averse to innovations, and satisfied to live in precisely the same manner in which their fathers have lived before them, they readily acquire the arts which have been introduced by the new occupiers of the country.

The bread eaten in native houses is very different from that which appears at European tables, but Le Mann himself could scarcely compete with a native baker in the manufacture of fancy bread; and where there is sufficient demand, every article which can be grown or manufactured by natives in India, can be procured from them quite as good,

* Wine was made in India in the time of Acbar, which sold in Europe at a price equal to that of Shiraz.

and at half the price at which it could be furnished by an European. At present, it is only at English farms that veal of tolerably fair quality can be obtained, and even at these places the fattening of calves is very ill understood. As the breed of cattle is particularly diminutive, a well-grown calf in Hindostan is seldom larger than a good sized lamb in England, and the meat is generally lean and of a bad colour. People, before they go out to India, pay little attention to agricultural concerns, and nine out of ten of those who embark in trade take up such employments as happen to be vacant or of good promise, whether they are qualified by previous acquaintanceship or not, that being a secondary consideration. Theoretical knowledge is difficult to acquire where books are scarce and dear, and the practical experience of a few scattered persons is not easily disseminated throughout a country where the British population is always unsettled, and where each individual is only desirous to obtain an income which will enable him to return home. Notwithstanding the long droughts of India, if greater attention was paid to the cultivation of grasses, there would always be sufficient for the consumption of the cattle, which now, during many months of the year, are either kept

upon *gram*, or suffered to pick up a miserable existence upon the coarsest fodder. In the latter case, the milk yielded by the cows is of wretched quality, and the butter of course of very inferior description, while the excellence of that produced under the superintendence of the few gentlemen who are acquainted with the proper method of feeding, shews the capabilities of the country, and renders it grievous that so little is done in the way of improvement.

It is an extraordinary fact, that no European has been at the trouble to instruct the natives in the art of fattening chickens. The small, plump, white, delicate bipeds, which are the ornaments of an English dinner, never make their appearance at an Indian board: half-grown and whole-grown fowls are to be seen, but no dainty little chickens, no turkey poults, and no ducklings. In a country in which poultry of every kind is so abundant, it would be the easiest thing in the world to procure a constant supply of these delicacies; but as the natives are fond of dishes upon a grand scale, they entertain a sovereign contempt for such trifling viands, and require to be informed of their importance by foreigners. The present system of education, in excluding all acquaintance with vulgar

domestic duties, prevents the ladies who go out to India from rectifying the errors of their servants, and amid abundance of every kind, their tables are often deficient in those refinements which might be procured by a very trifling degree of knowledge, and at a very small expense of time and trouble.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAVELLING BY DAK.

A GREAT number of persons who go out to India to seek their fortunes in the various departments of commerce, or who practise at the supreme courts either as counsel or attornies, or who have obtained permanent employments at Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay, frequently spend their whole lives in the Company's territories, without penetrating farther than the presidency to which they may be attached. But it is otherwise with the civil and military servants of the state: a more unfixed, unsettled, floating community cannot be imagined. If not compelled to change their abodes by virtue of government-orders, the pursuit of health, or the urgency of private affairs, occasions frequent journies, and with the exception of a few hardy individuals, who actually appear to take root in the soil to which they have been transplanted in early youth, a propensity to rove seems to characterize the whole body of Anglo-Indians.

The three modes of travelling in India are, by *dák* (post), by marching, and by water in a pinnace or budgerow. The cold season is the only period of the year in which a march can be performed without great inconvenience. The rains offer the most favourable time for a voyage, the rivers being very low in the dry weather, while it is generally practicable to travel by *dák*, except when the country is completely under water, in which case this method is subject to much discomfort and considerable delay. In a *dák* journey, the traveller must apply to the postmaster of the place of his residence to furnish him with relays of bearers to a given point, a preliminary which is called "laying the *dák*:" the time of starting is specified, and the different places at which it may be expedient to rest. Three or four days' notice is usually required to enable the *dák*-master to apprise the public functionaries of the different villages of the demand for bearers: the traveller must be provided with his own palanquin, and his own *banghies* (boxes), ropes, and bamboos.

Will it be necessary, in these enlightened times, to describe a palanquin? It would be an affront to the reading public to suppose it ignorant of the shape and construction of the conveyances employed

in Lapland, Greenland, Kamschatka, or Timbuctoo, but it is content with very superficial information respecting the East-Indies, which usually presents itself to the mind in an indistinct and gorgeous vision, seas of gold and minarets of pearl, or shining in all the variegated hues of Aladdin's gem-decked garden. Some writer of an Eastern tale, in an Annual, has represented a native prince travelling with his daughter in her magnificent palanquin, a vehicle in which there is scanty accommodation for one, even when formed upon the most roomy plan.

An oblong chest will convey the truest idea which can be given of this conveyance; the walls are of double canvas, painted and varnished on the outside, and lined within with chintz or silk; it is furnished on either side with sliding wooden doors, fitted into grooves, and when unclosed disappearing between the canvas walls; the roof projects about an inch all round, and is sometimes double, to keep off the heat of the sun. In front, there are two small windows furnished with blinds, and beneath them run a shelf and a shallow drawer. The bottom is made of split cane interwoven like that of a chair, and having a mattrass, a bolster, and pillow covered either with leather or chintz: some are also

supplied with a moveable support for the back, in case the traveller should prefer sitting upright to reclining at full length. The poles jet out at each end near the top; they are slightly curved, and each is long enough to rest upon the shoulders of two men, who stand one on each side, shifting their shoulders as they run along. Could the palanquin be constructed to swing upon springs, no conveyance would be more easy and agreeable; but mechanical art has made little progress in India; no method has yet been struck out to prevent the vehicle from jolting. It is said that the pendulous motion, which would be the least unpleasant to the traveller, would distress the bearers; but when the makers shall be men of science, this difficulty will vanish.

The preparations for a *dák* journey are simple. The necessary baggage is packed into *petarrahs* or *banghies*, which are sometimes square tin boxes of a particular size, fitted for the mode of conveyance with conical tops; at others, round covered baskets sewed up in painted canvas. These are slung with ropes to each end of a bamboo, which is carried across a man's shoulder, two *banghie*-bearers being usually attached to the *dák*. A desk may be placed upon the shelf before-mentioned, and other small

packages stowed in the palanquin, which should be supplied with biscuits, a tumbler, a bottle of wine or brandy, and a *serai* (a long-necked porous jar) of water wrapped in a wet cloth, which may be tied to one of the poles outside. Eight men attend to carry the palanquin, who relieve each other by turns, the four off duty running by the side of the vehicle. At night, two *mussaulchees* (torch-bearers) are added. These men are all Hindoos, and belong to one of the poorest, though not the lowest castes; they bring with them their cloths, *lotas* (drinking-vessels), and provision for a meal, which they pack upon the top of the palanquin, and retaining a very scanty portion of drapery upon their persons, present an exceedingly grotesque appearance. When all is ready, they take up their burthen and set off at a round pace, going, when the road is good, at the rate of from three miles and a-half to four miles an hour.

The stages vary from ten to fourteen miles, and a change of bearers is often effected in the midst of a wide plain. The relay, which is generally in waiting for some time, kindle a fire, groupe themselves around it, and beguile the interval with smoking or sleeping. When drawing near to the appointed spot, the traveller is made aware of the

circumstance by the shouts of his own people, who exclaim, in loud but musical accents, "*dák wallah, dák wallah, tiar hi?*" (*dák* men or fellows, are you ready?) The welcome response is joyfully received, and in a few minutes more the palanquin is put down amid the cries of "*Ram! Ram!*"* an expression which, when thus used, conveys both salutation and thankfulness. The tired traveller will often echo the "*Ram! Ram!*" of his weary bearers, who, if they have received the customary *buxies* (present) of an eight-anna piece, take leave with shouts of "*salaam, Saib.*"

In preparing for a *dák* journey, care should be taken to secure a halt of eight or twelve hours, at stated distances, certainly not exceeding a hundred miles, while a lady will find it expedient to rest after she has traversed fifty or sixty. On the great road, from Calcutta to Cawnpore, there are government-bungalows at the end of every stage, built purposely for the accommodation of travellers; but on other routes, they must depend upon the hospitality of individuals. It can always be previously ascertained when and where it may be advisable to rest, and notices to the persons whose houses lie in

* A contraction of *Rama*, one of the numerous gods of the Hindu mythology.

the road can be conveyed at the time that the bearers are summoned, though in no instance would a *dák* traveller be refused admittance, and it is only necessary to go up to the gate and ask for shelter.

In the hot season, persons who brave the heat of the day in a palanquin, venture at the risk of their lives: they should always take care to be housed by twelve o'clock. Not a few, who have unadvisedly set out upon a long journey without the necessary precaution of breaking it by remaining under some friendly roof during the sultry hours, have been found dead in their palanquins, and others have escaped with very severe fevers. In the cold weather, it is more agreeable to travel by day, the nights being very piercing. As the doors can only be partially open until after sunset, very little of the country is to be seen from a palanquin; however, the eye may still find amusement in contemplating the passing objects, and, particularly in Bengal, the gambols of the monkeys crashing amid the boughs of the trees above, and the fireflies irradiating the leaves of whole groves, shooting in and out in coruscations of emerald light, afford gratification to those who are willing to be amused.

A journey by *dák* is the only rapid method of travelling which has yet been devised in India, and the rate, compared with that in European countries, is slow indeed. It is also very expensive if the distance be long, the charge made by the postmaster being a shilling per mile. There is likewise a demand for a deposit, under the name of demurrage, which the traveller forfeits should he detain the bearers in places not specified in the route.

The *dák* traveller experiences considerable inconvenience in being deprived of the attendance of his own servants, who must follow in a much more tedious manner. While actually upon the road, the want of domestics is not felt, the bearers being particularly attentive to the comforts of the traveller: even persons unacquainted with Hindostanee may trust themselves to a long journey, secure that the different sets of natives, who may be employed to carry them, will endeavour, with the most earnest zeal, to comprehend and obey their commands.* On one occasion, a lady, who did not know ten words of the language, obtained a very

* A very few words will suffice to carry a *dák* traveller over India. *Ootow* (lift up), *jeldie jow* (quickly go), *pinnakee-panee low* (drinking water bring); and in answer to all questions, *dustoor ca maffie* (do according to custom).

comfortable breakfast by pointing to a bottle of tea which she had with her in the palanquin, and making the bearers understand that she wished to have it heated. They kindled a fire, warmed the tea in an earthen pipkin purchased for the purpose, and catching a goat presented her with a tumbler-full of its milk. The place selected for the *déjeûné* gave evidence of their good taste: they put the palanquin down under a cluster of trees which crowned a slight elevation in the road; a few Moosulmanee tombs lay scattered around, with a well in the distance, whence groupes of females, bearing the graceful *gurrah* on their heads, passed to and fro from the neighbouring village.

In most cases where complaints are made of the bearers, the fault, upon investigation, will be found to lie with the traveller. Raw young men, and sometimes even those who have not the excuse of youth and inexperience, are but too apt to amuse themselves by playing tricks with, or beating, their luckless bearers, who are not unfrequently treated like beasts of burthen. They have it in their power to retaliate, and when provoked to excess, punish the offender, by putting the palanquin down, and making off to the jungles. A three or four hours' detention upon the road, perhaps under a burning

sun, is the consequence, and it would require a very vivid imagination to conceive a more disagreeable situation, especially to a person wholly unacquainted with the country, and the means of procuring a new set of bearers to carry him on. The chance of falling in with a European is very small indeed, and few of the passers-by would consider it to be their duty to offer their assistance. Natives do not trouble themselves about the affairs of strangers, and they would consider it to be the will of heaven that a Saib should lie upon the road, and would not think of interfering unless especially called upon to do so. As there is only one particular caste who will carry burthens upon their shoulders, the palanquin would remain in a quiescent state for ever, before men who were not bearers by birth and profession would lift it from the ground: they would ejaculate upon being hailed, and pass on, confining their services to the report of the affair to the *cutwal* or *jemadar* of a neighbouring village, who would send bearers if they could be procured, which is not always the case under several hours' notice.

It happened to the writer that, upon a *dák* journey, the *bhangie* ropes broke, and were useless. The *bhangie*-bearers could not be prevailed upon

to carry the boxes on their heads, and at every stage a considerable delay took place in procuring *coolies* to convey a burthen rejected by persons belonging to a different class. *Sirdar*-bearers, *chuprassies*, &c. will carry a *guttrie*, or bundle, but will upon no account submit to the disgrace of a box. They sometimes insist upon taking out a crape or gauze dress, and wrapping it in a towel, to the utter destruction of its furbelows; and many are the lively discussions which occur between them and the *ayah* upon these occasions.

But to return to the discomforts of a *dák* journey. Policy as well as humanity should teach Europeans to treat the natives of India with kindness; they have frequently the power (though, to their credit be it spoken, they rarely avail themselves of it) of avenging their injuries, and the advantages of a good name can in no country be of higher value. The *bhote utcha Saib*, or the *bhote utcha Bebee*, who have procured the commendations of the natives around them, will find their fame very widely extended. They are secure of meeting respect and attention wheresoever they may go, while those of a contrary character are equally certain of being shunned by all who are not actually compelled to render them unwilling service.

The repose obtained in a palanquin is liable to many interruptions; at the end of each stage there is the clamour for *buxies*, and when the vehicle gets into the hands of a set of bearers who are either ill-matched in size, or who do not step out well together, the jolting is tremendous.

The pleasantest period of the year for *dák* travelling is immediately after the breaking up of the rains, when the waters have subsided, but the earth remains moist and free from dust. The sun is then not too oppressive to be borne during the day, and the nights are cool without being chilling. Unfortunately, the season for these enjoyments is very transient; at the expiration of a month, the dust and the cold become extremely disagreeable, the wind whistles through the palanquin, and at night blankets are necessary to guard the person from the frosty air. A *dák* journey in the rains is attended with many difficulties and some dangers; but if the palanquin can be kept dry, the fatigue and annoyance are confined to the bearers, for the individual who is conveyed sees the country to the greatest advantage. The charms of a cloudy sky can only be truly estimated by those who have lived under sunshine and glare until they are nearly blinded. The palanquin-doors may be thrown open, and the

various beauties of the jungles display themselves to view; every spot is covered with the richest verdure, and creepers of luxuriant growth, studded with myriads of stars, fling their bright festoons from tree to tree. Those beautiful little mosques and pagodas, which in every part of India embellish the landscape, look like gems as they rise from the soft green turf which surrounds them; and the traveller who has passed, in a less propitious season, over an arid tract of sand, would scarcely, save for these landmarks, be able to recognize the country, so changed does it appear. An enchanter's wand has been over it, and laughing meads and valleys green are substituted for burning wastes, where not a single floweret deigned to grow.

The floods, though rather too abundant for comfort, are exceedingly picturesque; all the low grounds are inundated, and the bearers are obliged to wade, sometimes knee-deep, and at others up to their waists, in water. In dangerous passes, they are compelled to raise the palanquin upon their heads, and the utmost vigilance is necessary to secure the live cargo from a ducking. The men proceed cautiously, for a single false step, or an unexpected plunge of the foot into a hole, would occasion a serious upset. But such accidents rarely

occur; the *mussaulchees*, in places where the flood is deep, precede the palanquin, and the bearers follow in the track which they have found to be safe, while the four off duty assist their comrades by giving each a hand: this is also done when the roads are very slippery, and the palanquin, literally handed along like a lady, would present a very ridiculous spectacle to a person unacquainted with the necessity of the case. The traveller is, however, little inclined to laugh at the droll appearance which his equipage affords, for it is rather a nervous thing to calculate the chances of a dipping, while making a slow progress through apparently interminable sheets of water, rising within half an inch of the floor of the palanquin, where one of those little tilts which so frequently occur unheeded on dry ground, would inevitably ship a sea, the consequences of which might be, in addition to the discomfort of wet clothes, a serious attack of fever and ague.

The country during the rainy season is intersected by *nullahs;* the floods convert every channel of the ravines into a rapid river, and the greater number being unfordable, they must be crossed in boats. Ferries are established upon the principal thoroughfares, and there is usually a group of natives as-

sembled on the bank. Time does not appear to be of the slightest value to the people of Hindostan; they will wait for days together at an unfrequented ghaut for the chance of getting a free passage, in a boat engaged by some more wealthy traveller, rather than pay the few pice demanded for their transport. The instant the palanquin is safely lodged in the boat, the crowd upon the bank embark, and if the owner should be so rash as to ask for his fee, the intruders enquire with great indignation if he be not satisfied with the *burra buxies* (great present) he has already received, declaring to a man that, after the Saib's extraordinary liberality, they will give him nothing: the boat belonged to the Saib, to whom their thanks are due. Apparently, this reasoning is conclusive; at least the boatman takes nothing by his motion.

The *jheels*, which sometimes assume the appearance of large lakes, are crossed with more trouble and difficulty. They are too extensive to be skirted, and are seldom provided with a boat. A raft is the substitute, and that is usually of the frailest description; a few bamboos are tied together, covered with grass, and floated upon *kedgeree* pots, with their mouths downwards. At night, the passage of one these *jheels* is really terrific, and

might be seriously alarming to a person of a timid disposition.

The writer retains a very vivid recollection of the wild and almost awful scene, which presented itself upon crossing a *jheel* of very considerable dimensions, in a *dâk* journey undertaken during a season of heavy rain. Fortunately, though new to the country, both her companion and herself reposed perfect confidence in the resources of the natives, and, satisfied that every care would be taken of them, submitted themselves entirely to the direction of their conductors. In consequence of the state of the roads, and the difficulties which two ladies might experience in traversing a country by night, flooded in every direction, the judge of the district had directed the attendance of a *chuprassee*, who with the bearers was relieved at every stage. The presence of this person certainly gave additional security to the party, who, divested of fear, lost the sense of discomfort in the novelty of the situation. The night was as dark as a romance-writer of the Radcliffe school could desire; not a single star was to be seen along the murky sky, and, black as Erebus, a dismal waste of waters stretched its pitchy waves as far as the eye could reach. A lurid light moved along the surface of this truly

Stygian lake,—the torch of a *mussaulchee*, who ventured over, up to his neck in water; this red speck settled into a point at a considerable distance, and in a short time, a large, nondescript, funereal object was dimly descried moving across. The travellers were then civilly requested to leave their palanquins, and found better accommodation than they had expected upon a *charpoy* or bedstead, which had been brought down to the edge of the water for them to sit on.

While watching the progress of the palanquins, which were taken over one at a time, the raft not being strong enough to bear them both at once, there was ample opportunity to contemplate the landscape. It was darkness made visible by the red glare of a few torches, which gave indistinct glimpses of the surrounding objects; sometimes they threw their waving flames upon the swart faces of a wild groupe, apparently struggling in the water, round the shapeless raft,—fiendish forms, well-suited to the murky depths whence they seemed to have emerged from abysses still more fearful. At length the floating mass a third time approached the shore, and half a dozen men, taking up the *charpoy*, carried it a few yards into the water. The side of the raft being obtained, the passengers were

placed upon it, and they found themselves fairly launched on a sea of sable hue; blackness was above, around, below, and should any accident occur to the slight vessel, if such it might be called, which bore them on, there would be little chance of a rescue from the dingy flood. The passage was fortunately achieved in safety, and most gladly did they quit their damp couch upon the wet grass for their comfortable palanquins, whence they cast a parting glance upon the dreary expanse they were leaving behind. After an absence of eight months, the travellers returned; not a single vestige remained of the lake of the dismal swamp, which had been transformed into a basin of deep sand, bare, barren, and thirsty. The *nullahs* also were dry, the grass had disappeared, and with it nature's loveliest charms.

It is only when night spreads its mysterious spell over the scene, that an Indian landscape, during the dry weather, can captivate the eye, however luxuriant the foliage may be, and that never appears to be scorched by the sun. However romantic the temples, more than half their charm is lost when they spring from an arid soil; but starlight or moonlight can invest them with a divine aspect: the barren sands become soft

and silvery; and the parched desert, cool and refreshed, cheats the vision with a semblance of verdure. To a *dák* traveller, the changes produced by the approach of night are particularly striking: his eyes have been wearied for many hours with dust and glare, and he hails the first shadows cast by the setting sun with joy. So extraordinary is the illusion, that it would not be difficult to fancy that he was entering upon some new country; some enchanting paradise hitherto undiscovered, whence all unsightly things have been banished, or where they never found a place. An Indian night is superb; excepting at intervals during the rains, it is always light enough to distinguish objects at a considerable distance; the heavens shine with stars, and the moonlight descends in floods. Beneath the midnight planetary beam, the most simple and unpretending building is decked with beauty; the mud hut of some poor native, with its coarse drapery of climbing gourds, shews like a fairy bower, and the barest sand-bank, topped with the wretched habitations of humble villagers, assumes a romantic appearance, outlined against the dark blue sky spangled with innumerable stars.

The stately elephant never attains so grand and imposing an attitude as at night; pacing singly

over the plain, his crimson trappings gleaming in the starlight, he is far more majestic than under any other circumstances, and when three or four are seen in a bivouac together, they look like masses of black marble; some huge monumental effigy sacred to the departed genii of the land. A well, a *kafila*, with its sleeping bullocks stretching their weary limbs around their burthens, or an express camel suddenly emerging from the shade, and striding again into darkness, fill the mind with pleasing images. Daylight dissolves the spell; squalid objects re-appear; dust and dilapidation abound amid the dwellings of man; the too glorious sunshine envelopes the distant scene in a dazzling veil, and the only resource is to shut up the doors of the palanquin, and endeavour to bear the heat and the dust with patience. During the hot winds, both are dreadful throughout the day, and nothing save the most extraordinary exigence, should induce an European to expose himself to the sultry atmosphere around.

Attempts are made to cool the palanquins by means of tattees, an expedient which materially heightens the expense of travelling, as (*bheestees* must be engaged to supply water) and which frequently fails in the desired object. The air is

made damp but not cool, and few constitutions are strong enough to be proof against the exhaustion, or the fever, which, according to the peculiar temperament of the body, will be the result.

In some of the jungley districts of India, a *dák* traveller may be surprized by the unwelcome appearance of a tiger. In this event, the bearers, justly considering self-preservation to be the first law of nature, usually betake themselves to flight; leaving their employer to do battle in the best way he can with the monster of the wild: conduct which excites a higher degree of indignation than it merits, since they are certainly more exposed to a sudden spring than the person inside the palanquin, and are also less able to defend themselves. It is much easier to escape without their burthen, and it does appear rather hard that they should be expected to risk their lives in defence of a stranger, who has merely hired them to carry a palanquin. When so disagreeable an interruption to a journey may be expected, the traveller is of course upon his guard. Upon approaching a dangerous pass, gentlemen usually alight, and producing pistols, threaten to shoot the first man who shall make an attempt to quit his post. As they have a better chance of escaping the tiger, the measure is gene-

rally effectual, although were the animal to make a sudden appearance, perhaps even a pistol at the head would be insufficient to arrest their steps.

Many instances are recorded of imminent risks sustained in an undesired meeting with an enemy of this description. A gentleman, seated with his palanquin doors open, espied, in broad day, one of these monsters stretched at full length beneath a a tree, not very far from the road-side; fortunately, he was not perceived by the bearers, who kept steadily upon their way, and he, either being asleep, or too well gorged to require an additional meal, allowed the whole *cortège* to pass unmolested.

CHAPTER IX.

BENARES.

THE holy city of Benares, the seat of Hindu superstition, is not more remarkable for its antiquities, and the sanctity with which it has been invested by the bigoted worshippers of Brahma, than for the singularity of its structure, its vast wealth, and immense population. It stands upon the left bank of the Ganges, stretching several miles along the shore; the river is about thirty feet below the level of the houses, and is attained by numerous ghauts, which spread their broad steps between fantastic buildings of the most grotesque and curious description. The confused masses of stone, which crowd upon each other in this closely-built city, sometimes present fronts so bare and lofty, as to convey the idea of a prison or fortress. Others are broken into diminutive pagodas, backed by tall mansions seven stories in height, and interspersed with Gothic gateways, towers, and arches, (all profusely covered with ornaments,) balconies, verandahs, battlements, mullioned windows, balus-

trades, turrets, cūpolas, and round and pointed domes, the fancies of all ages. Since the conquest of the city by Arungzebe, Moosulman architecture has reared its light and elegant erections amid the more heavy and less tasteful structures of Hindu creation. From a mosque, built upon the ruins of a heathen temple, spring those celebrated minarets, which now rank amid the wonders of the city. Their lofty spires shoot up into the golden sky from a dense cluster of buildings, crowning the barbaric pomp below with graceful beauty.

Notwithstanding its great antiquity, and the immense sums lavished upon its pagodas, Benares does not boast a single specimen of those magnificent temples which, in other parts of India, convey so grand an idea of the vast conceptions of their founders. Here are no pyramidal masses of fretted stone, no huge conical mounds of solid masonry standing alone to astonish the eye, as at Bindrabund; no gigantic tower like the Cootub Minar at Delhi, to fill the imagination with awe and wonder; but the whole of this enormous city is composed of details, intermingled with each other without plan or design, yet forming altogether an architectural display of the most striking and imposing nature. Amid much that is strange and

fantastic, there are numerous specimens of a pure and elegant taste, and the small antique pagodas, which abound in every direction, are astonishingly beautiful. The lavish ornaments of richly-sculptured stone, with which they are profusely adorned, give evidence of the skill and talent of the artists of their day, and throughout the whole of the city a better taste is displayed in the embellishments of the houses than is usually found in the private buildings of India. There are fewer elephants of clay, and misshapen camels, with round towers of tile upon their backs, stuck upon the projecting cornices of the habitations of the middling classes. The florid ornaments of wood and stone profusely spread over the fronts of the dwelling-houses, bring to the mind recollections of Venice, which Benares resembles in some other particulars; one or two of the lofty narrow streets being connected by covered passages not very unlike the far-famed Bridge of Sighs.

The views of Benares from the river are exceedingly fine, offering an infinite and untiring variety of scenery, of which the effect is greatly heightened by the number of trees, whose luxuriant foliage intermingles with the parapets and buttresses of the adjacent buildings. In dropping down the stream

in a boat, an almost endless succession of interesting objects is presented to the eye. Through the interstices between tower and palace, temple and serái, glimpses are caught of gardens and bazaars stretching inland; an open gate displays the terraced court of some wealthy noble; long cloistered corridors lead to the secluded recesses of the zenana, and small projecting turrets, perched upon the lofty battlements of some high and frowning building, look like the watch-towers of a feudal castle. The ghauts are literally swarming with life at all hours of the day, and every creek and jetty are crowded with craft of various descriptions, all truly picturesque in their form and effect. A dozen budgerows are moored in one place; the light *bohlio* dances on the rippling current at another: a splendid pinnace rears its gaily-decorated masts at a third: while large *patalas*, and other clumsy native vessels, laden with cotton or some equally cumbrous cargo, choke up the river near some well-frequented wharf. Small fairy shallops are perpetually skimming over the surface of the glittering stream, and sails, some white and dazzling, others of a deep saffron hue, and many made up of tattered fragments which bear testimony to many a heavy squall, appear in all directions.

No written description, however elaborate, can convey even a faint idea of the extraordinary peculiarities of a place which has no prototype in the East. Though strictly oriental, it differs very widely from all the other cities of Hindostan, and it is only by pictorial representations that any adequate notion can be formed of the mixture of the beautiful and the grotesque, which, piled confusedly together, form that stupendous wall which spreads along the bank of the Ganges at Benares. It is much to be lamented that no panoramic view has ever been exhibited of this singular place, and still more so that the exquisitely-faithful delineations of Mr. Daniell, an artist so long and so actively employed in pourtraying the wonders of nature and of art in India, should not be in every body's hands. His portfolios are rich in specimens of Benares, and the engravings from his works, executed under his own eye, retain all those delicate touches which are so necessary to preserve the oriental character of the original sketches. Drawings made in India, and sent to England to be engraved, are subject to much deterioration in the process, from the negligence of persons, wholly unacquainted with the peculiarities of the country, to whom they are entrusted, and many of the cheap

productions of this class, from the pencils of very able amateur artists, are rendered almost worthless by the ignorance and inaccuracy of those persons who are employed to prepare them for the engraver.

Writers upon India have frequently occasion to express their surprise at the extreme carelessness and indifference which prevail in England concerning those magnificent realms whence, in other days, the whole of Europe derived its improvements in arts and arms; but in no instance can their astonishment be more highly raised than by the sight of the numerous and interesting sketches, which Mr. Daniell has not yet been encouraged to give to the public.

Few Europeans have ever been tempted to take up their abode in the close and crowded city of Benares; the military and civil station is about two miles distant, and is called, in Government Orders and other official documents, Secrole; this name is, however, seldom used by the inhabitants, and few ever talk of Secrole as their destination, Benares being by far the most common and popular term. The garrison, consisting of about three native regiments, and a small train of artillery, is under the command of a major-general; and at the distance of a few miles, at Sultanpore, a na-

tive cavalry corps is stationed. The civil appointments are very numerous and splendid, and Secrole possesses some of the finest and best-appointed mansions in India: formerly the establishment of a mint added to the number of European inhabitants; but its abolition, which took place a few years ago, is now very severely felt by those who remember the talent and intelligence connected with it in the days of Anglo-Indian splendour. The usual amusements of a Mofussil station,—balls, private theatricals, dinners, morning calls, and scandal, are diversified by occasional visits to the city. Few of the numerous travellers who pass through the district are so totally destitute of curiosity as not to feel desirous to penetrate into the interior of a place so widely celebrated. The ascents of the minarets is a feat of which people like to boast, who care very little for the view which is to be obtained from them, and consequently, excursions to the holy city take place very frequently.

There is nothing either striking or beautiful in the environs of Benares; the cantonments do not possess any remarkable feature to distinguish them from other military stations; they are flat and destitute of views, but are redeemed from positive ugliness by the groves with which they are sur-

rounded. Immediately beyond the military lines, the tract towards the city becomes interesting; several very handsome Moosulman tombs shew the vast increase of the followers of a foreign creed in the sacred birth-place of Brahma, and the desecration of this holy spot is made still more apparent by the carcasses of animals hung up, in defiance of the brahmins, in butchers' shops. Formerly none save human sacrifices were tolerated, and upon the first occupation of Benares by the British it was thought advisable to refrain from slaughtering bullocks and calves: beef and veal are now to be had in abundance, and the Hindoos, if not reconciled, have become accustomed to the murders committed upon the peculiar favourites of the priesthood. A long straggling suburb, composed of houses of singular construction, in every stage of dilapidation, rendered exceedingly picturesque by intervening trees and flowering shrubs, leads to the gate of the city; and a short and rather wide avenue brings the visitor to the *chokey*, a large irregular square. From this point vehicles of European construction are useless, and the party must either mount upon elephants, dispose themselves in *ton jawns*, or proceed on foot; and very early in the morning, before the population of this

crowded city is astir, the latter affords by far the best method of visiting the temples; but the instant that the tide of human beings has poured itself into the narrow avenues, it is expedient to be removed from actual contact with the thickly-gathering throng.

Benares, at day-break, presents less of animated life than any other city of the same magnitude and extent: a few sweepers only appear in the streets; all the houses are shut up, and give no sign of the multitudes who swarm within. The shops are closely barricaded, the usual mode of fastening them being by a strong chain attached by a large padlock to a staple beneath the threshold. At this early hour, the streets are very clean, and the air of the city is much cooler and fresher than might be expected from its denseness and population. Its zoological inhabitants are up and abroad with the first gleam of the sun; the brahminee bulls perambulate the streets, monkeys spring from cornice to cornice, and flights of pigeons and paroquets dart from the parapets in every direction. As soon as it is broad day, the priests repair to the temples, and devotees are seen conveying the sacred water from the Ganges to the several shrines. At the doors of the pagodas, per-

sons are stationed with baskets of flowers for sale. Long rosaries of scarlet, white, or yellow blossoms, seem to be in the greatest request, and are purchased by the pious as offerings to their gods: the pavements of the temples are strewed with these floral treasures, the only pleasing ceremonial connected with Hindoo worship. The too-abundant supply of water, the dirty throng of religious beggars, and the incessant vociferations of "Ram! Ram!" compel all save determined antiquaries to make a speedy exit from the noise and crowd of these places.

The observatory and the minarets are the principal objects of attraction to parties who merely desire to see the *lions* of Benares; but, in proceeding thither, visitors who take an interest in the homely occupations of the native traders, may be amused by the opening of the shops, and the commencement of the stir, bustle, and traffic, which at ten o'clock will have reached its climax. The rich merchandize with which the city abounds, according to the custom of Hindostan, is carefully concealed from the view of passengers; but in the tailors' shops, some of the costly products of the neighbouring countries are exhibited. Those skilful artists, who can repair a rent with invisible

stitches, sit in groups, employed in mending superb shawls, which, after having passed through their practised hands, will sell, to inexperienced purchasers, for new ones fresh from the looms of Thibet. The shops of the copper-smiths make the most show; they are gaily set out with brass and copper vessels of various kinds, some intended for domestic use, and others for that of the temples.

In every street, a shroff or banker may be seen, seated behind a pile of cowries, with bags of silver and copper at his elbow. These men make considerable sums in the course of the day, by changing specie; they deduct a per-centage from every rupee, and are notorious usurers, lending out their money at enormous interest. Here too are confectioners, surrounded by the common sweetmeats which are so much in request, and not unfrequently employed in the manufacture of their sugar-cakes. In an iron kettle, placed over a charcoal fire, the syrup is boiling; the contents are occasionally stirred with an iron ladle, and when the mixture is "thick and slab," and has imbibed a due proportion of the dust which rises in clouds from the well-trodden street, ladle-fulls are poured upon an iron plate which covers a charcoal stove, whence, when sufficiently baked, they

are removed to their places on the counter or platform, on which the whole process is conducted. Those dainty cook-shops, so temptingly described in the *Arabian Nights*, decked with clean white cloths, and furnished with delicate cream tarts, with or without pepper, are not to be seen in India; yet the tables of the Hindoos, though more simple than those of the luxurious Moosulmans, are not destitute of richly-seasoned viands, and the finer sort of confections.

The dyers, punkah-makers, and several others, also carry on their respective occupations in their open shops; the houses of the former are distinguished by long pieces of gaily-coloured cloths, hung across projecting poles. In these, the bright red of the Indian rose, and the superb yellow, the bridal colour of the Hindoos, are the most conspicuous; they likewise produce brilliant greens and rich blues, which, when formed into turbans and cummerbunds, very agreeably diversify the white dresses of an Indian crowd.

Learning, as well as religion, still flourishes in Benares; but both have degenerated since the Moslem conquest. The brahmins of the Hindoo college, once so celebrated for its pundits, are not so well skilled in Sanscrit as might have been

expected from the great encouragement afforded to the institution by the British Government. The best scholars are now to be found amid the Anglo-Indian community. It is said that a former secretary of the college, an appointment always given to an European officer in the Company's service, lost his life in consequence of the jealousy entertained by the brahmins of his superior learning. He had succeeded in unravelling a part of an inscription belonging to a very ancient Hindoo temple at some distance from the city. His zeal and assiduity in the cause induced him to return to the labour again; but he died suddenly, ere he had completed a task which had baffled all his predecessors, and which had been pronounced to be utterly hopeless by the most erudite members of the college. In all probability, this gifted person fell a sacrifice to a jungle-fever, brought on by over-exertion and exposure to malaria; and the current report of his being poisoned by the brahmin of the temple, at the suggestion of his brethren of Benares, is merely recorded in this paper as a proof of the extraordinary celebrity which was supposed to have led to so fatal a catastrophe.

The observatory, though abandoned by its magi, still remains, a gigantic relic of the zeal in the

pursuit of science manifested in former days. The discoveries of modern times, adopted, though slowly, by eastern astronomers, have rendered it of little value for the purpose for which it was intended, and it has fallen into neglect and disuse, being no longer patronized by the native prince, who, until very lately, kept up an establishment there at his own expense. An extensive area, entered from the street, is divided into several small quadrangles, surrounded by cloisters, and forming cool and shady retreats, intended for the residences of those sages who studied the wonders of the firmament from the platform of the tower above. Broad flights of stairs lead to the summit of this huge, square, massive building, a terraced height well suited to the watchers of the stars, and which, at the time of its erection, was furnished with an apparatus very creditable to the state of science at that early period. The astrologer no longer takes his nightly stand on the lonely tower, reading the destinies of man in the bright book of the heavens, or calculating those eclipses which he imagined to be caused by the attacks of some malignant demon, anxiously endeavouring to extinguish the lights of the world: a belief which still prevails throughout India. Notwithstanding the repeated victories

achieved by the sun and moon, the Hindoo population, at every new eclipse, are seized with horror and consternation; they assemble in great multitudes at the ghauts, and attempt to frighten and drive away the evil spirit by sounding all sorts of discordant instruments, and keeping up an incessant clamour of the most frightful cries. Such is the confusion and terror which fill the breasts of the crowd, that the military and civil authorities are compelled to take active measures for the prevention of accidents and the suppression of tumults, which this dangerous state of excitement is too apt to occasion.

The view which the observatory commands is limited to the river and the country on the opposite bank; but a far more extensive prospect is obtained from the minarets. Adventurous persons, who have climbed to the light cupolas which crown these lofty spires, see the city of Benares under an entirely new aspect in this bird's-eye view. They perceive that there are wide spaces between the seven-storied buildings that form a labyrinth of lanes, and that gay gardens flourish in the midst of dense masses of brick and mortar. The hum of the busy multitude below is scarcely heard, and they look down upon flocks of paroquets skimming through the

golden air at a considerable distance beneath. The palaces of the city, in all their varied styles of architecture, appear to great advantage from these heights. Gothic towers open upon luxuriant parterres, affording a more pleasing idea of the seclusion to which the ladies of the city are doomed, than those high, narrow houses, wedged closely against each other, where from the roof alone glimpses may be caught of living trees, where flowers withering in pots convey the only notion which the imprisoned females can obtain of the beauties of nature. Overtopped by some still more lofty mansion, or perhaps debarred from egress to a spot whence they may be descried by a prying neighbour, they grow up in total ignorance of the most common objects around them, and wear out their existence in dull monotony, enlivened only by the gossip of some privileged old woman, who carries news and scandal from house to house.

The usual style of building in Benares ensures the strictest privacy to the female portion of the family. The massy door from the street opens into a small court-yard, surrounded on all sides by high walls; one large apartment occupies the whole of the front, in every story; these rooms, which are airy and well supplied with windows and verandahs

overlooking the street, are exclusively occupied by the gentlemen of the house. On each floor, a covered gallery runs round three sides of the court-yard, leading to small chambers, or rather cells, where the women and their attendants are immured. They have no outlet whatever to the street, and look down either upon a pretty fountain, where the quadrangle below is neatly kept, or upon the goats and cows which frequently occupy the ground-floor. Some of the interiors of these houses are richly decorated with carved wood highly polished. In the cold season, costly carpets are spread over the floors; and the *pāān* boxes, and other vessels in daily use, are of silver beautifully wrought.

Many of the inhabitants are extremely rich; and besides its native population, Benares is the occasional residence of distinguished strangers from all parts of the peninsula. A great number of Hindoo princes and nobles possess mansions in the holy city; it is the asylum of deposed or abdicated monarchs; the refuge of rebels and usurpers; and wealthy devotees from distant places retire to draw their last breath within the sacred precincts, where all who are so fortunate as to die in the good graces of the brahmins, are sure of going straight to heaven, even though they may have eaten beef. Poorer

pilgrims flock from every corner of Hindostan, anxious to perform their ablutions in a spot held sacred by all castes, who believe it to be a creation of the gods, distinct from the rest of the world, formed of unpolluted earth, and resting upon the point of Siva's trident. In spite of the desecrations of the Moosulmauns, it still retains its holy character; but since the Moghul conquest, the religious ceremonies have lost somewhat of their revolting barbarity. Human victims have for a considerable period ceased to bleed upon the altars, and by a late edict of the British Government, the cremation of widows, a spectacle which occurred more frequently at Benares than in any other part of the Company's territories, is no longer permitted.

The ladies, it is said, complain very bitterly of the hardship of being prevented from burning, and perhaps in many instances it may be severely felt; for women, brought up in a state of apathetic luxury, are ill calculated to endure the penances and privations which must be the lot of those who are so unfortunate as to survive their husbands. It is reckoned very discreditable for a woman to appear plump and healthy at the end of her first year of mourning; it is expected that she shall be reduced by long and frequent fasts, and in her, the

outward signs of woe are to be shewn in an emaciated frame and premature old age; she is forbidden the luxuries of dress, and must perform servile offices revolting to a woman of high birth, long accustomed to the attendance of a train of dependants. Deprived of the few enjoyments which the tyranny of the customs of the East allows to its females, who, brought up in ignorance and imprisonment, should at least be secured from want and suffering, a Hindoo widow is one of the most pitable objects in the creation: it is to be hoped that the abolition of the rite of *suttee* will pave the way to more enlightened notions on the subject of female privileges, and that some adequate provision will be made by law to secure the relicts of men of wealth from being cast entirely upon the mercy of their relations.

The commerce of Benares is in a very flourishing condition; besides the extensive traffic which the merchants of the city carry on in shawls, diamonds, and other precious articles, numbers are engaged in the manufacture and sale of the celebrated gold and silver brocades which are known in India by the name of *kincob*. These costly tissues are worn as gala dresses by all the wealthy classes of Hindostan, whether Moslem or Hindoo; they have not

been superseded, like the calicoes and muslins of native looms, by European goods of a similar description, and even the magic power of machinery may be defied by the artizan who weaves his splendid web of silk and silver, after the methods taught by his forefathers, in the secluded factories of Benares. Scarfs of gold and silver stuff, called Benares turbans, with deep fringed borders beautifully wrought, and resembling a rich setting of gems, have found their way to the shops of London, and are much esteemed for the peculiar brilliance of their materials; but these do not equal in beauty the embroidery of the native *puggree*, or turban, upon velvet; these superb head-dresses look like clusters of precious stones, and a handsome well-proportioned native, attired in a vest and trowsers of crimson and gold brocade, a cummerbund, composed of a Cashmere shawl, wound round his waist, a second shawl thrown over one shoulder, and the belt of his scimitar and the studs of his robe sparkling with diamonds, may challenge the world to produce a more tasteful and magnificent costume. Nobles clad in this glittering array, and mounted upon chargers decked with trappings of solid silver, often flash like meteors through the square of the city, and sometimes the accidental opening of the curtain

of a native palanquin will reveal a still brighter vision,—a lady reclining on the cushions, covered with jewels.

Silver and gold lace, of every kind and pattern, fringes, scalloped trimmings, edgings, and borders of all widths, are to be purchased at Benares exceedingly cheap, when compared to the prices demanded for such articles in Europe; but the Anglo-Indian ladies rarely avail themselves of these glittering bargains, excepting when fancy balls are on the *tapis*, as there is a prejudice against the adoption of decorations worn by native women. A few, however, have the good taste to prefer the Indian ornaments of goldsmith's work to trinkets of European manufacture, which, alloyed to the lowest degree of baseness, and depending solely upon some ephemeral fashion for their value, are literally not worth an eighth part of the original purchase-money; while the unrivalled workmanship of a first-rate native artizan, and the solid weight of unadulterated metal contained in the chains, necklaces, ear-rings, and bangles, which he has wrought, render them an excellent investment for floating cash, which would otherwise be expended upon trifles.

The ornaments worn by Hindostanee females are,

generally speaking, very tasteful and elegant; the pattern of the double *joomka* ear-rings has been borrowed by European jewellers, and bracelets resembling the Indian bangle are now very common; but the splendid necklaces, so richly carved as to glitter like precious stones, are more rarely seen; they are formed of a series of drops beautifully wrought, and suspended from a closely-linked gold chain of exquisite workmanship. Pearls of immense size, and of the finest colour, may sometimes be purchased astonishingly cheap; they are much worn by the natives, and strings the size of pigeons' eggs are frequently exhibited round the necks of rich men. In the cutting and setting of precious stones, the lapidaries of the East do not excel; and it is rather difficult to ascertain the precise value of jewels which have not been committed to skilful hands. The natives are guilty of the barbarity of stringing diamonds, and shew less elegance in the disposition of gems than in any other branch of decorative art.

The rajah of Benares, a prince who, bereft of all the power exercised by his ancestors, retains his title and a revenue adequate to the support of his diminished rank, resides at Ramnaghur, a fortified palace a few miles up the river. He also possesses

a large mansion in the neighbourhood of the cantonments, built after the Anglo-Indian fashion, which he visits occasionally, and where he entertains the families of the civil and military officers of the station during the celebration of some of the most noted Hindoo festivals. The taste and courtesy of the rajah is displayed to great advantage at the *hoolee*, in which the principal diversion seems to consist in powdering the persons of all the passers-by with red dust. The showers of sugar-plums rained at the carnivals of Italy, are harmless compared to the peltings which take place on these occasions; white dresses speedily become parti-coloured, and at the conclusion, when the powder is mixed with water, every body who ventures abroad is daubed from head to foot with crimson. The Moosulman population join in the sport, and as it is a period of universal license, Europeans do not escape. Young officers are drenched from top to toe, and even ladies are not always quite secure that they shall preserve their garments unsullied. The fair guests of the rajah were therefore delighted to find that baskets of rose leaves had been substituted for the powdered *mhindee*, which is commonly used by the assailants: a costly act of gallantry, in a land where every rose is carefully

preserved for the *goulaabee paanee*,* which is consumed in vast quantities in every native house.

Indian gardeners are horrified by the wasteful manner in which European ladies are wont to gather roses: not content to take off the full blown flower close to the stem, and to tie it with a few green leaves at the end of a stick, they help themselves to a whole spray, containing perchance a dozen buds, doomed to perish untimely without yielding their exquisite breath in perfume. The knowledge of this frugal expenditure of roses furnishes a clue to the displeasure of Azor, who, in the Eastern tale, threatens the merchant with death for having dared to pluck a branch from one of his bushes, as a gift to his youngest and best-beloved daughter.

At the entertainments given by the rajah of Benares, the *nautch* is exhibited in great perfection. To European spectators, the performance soon grows exceedingly tiresome; but natives never appear to be weary of the evolutions of their favourites, and will sit with exemplary patience, from nightfall until daybreak, gazing upon the successive sets of dancers, who relieve each other throughout the night. The company assembled

* Rose water.

to witness a *nautch* occupy seats at the upper end of a large, brilliantly illuminated apartment; the sides are lined with servants, all anxious to partake of the enjoyment of the *tamasha* (shew), and other domestics are grouped at the farthest end, ready to introduce the performers. The parties, which appear in regular rotation, usually consist of seven persons; two only of these are the dancers, who advance in front of the audience, and are closely followed by three musicians, who take up their posts behind: a *mussaulchee* plants himself with his torch on either side, elevating or depressing his flambeau, according to the movements of the arms and feet of the *nautch* girls.

These ladies present very picturesque figures, though somewhat encumbered by the voluminous folds of their drapery. Their attire consists of a pair of gay-coloured silk trowsers, edged and embroidered with silver, so long as only to afford occasional glimpses of the rich anclets, strung with small bells, which encircle the legs. Their toes are covered with rings, and a broad, flat, silver chain is passed across the foot. Over the trowsers a petticoat of some rich stuff appears, containing at least twelve breadths, profusely trimmed, having broad silver or gold borders, finished with deep fringes of

the same. The *coortee*, or vest, is of the usual dimensions, but it is almost hidden by an immense veil, which crosses the bosom several times, hanging down in front and at the back in broad ends, either trimmed to match the petticoat, or composed of still more splendid materials, the rich tissues of Benares. The hands, arms, and neck, are covered with jewels, sometimes of great value, and the hair is braided with silver ribands, and confined with bodkins of beautiful workmanship. The ears are pierced round the top, and furnished with a fringe-like series of rings, in addition to the ornament worn in England: the diameter of the nose-ring is as large as that of a crown-piece; it is of gold wire, and very thin; a pearl and two other precious gems are strung upon it, dangling over the mouth, and disfiguring the countenance. With the exception of this hideous article of decoration, the dress of the *nautch* girls, when the wearers are young and handsome, and have not adopted the too prevailing custom of blackening their teeth, is not only splendid but becoming; but it requires, however, a tall and graceful figure to support the cumbrous habiliments which are worn indiscriminately by all the performers.

The *nautch* girls of India are singers as well as

dancers; they commence the vocal part of the entertainment in a high shrill key, which they sustain as long as they can; they have no idea whatsoever of modulating their voices, and the instruments which form the accompaniment are little less barbarous; these consist of two non-descript guitars, and a very small pair of kettle-drums, which chime in occasionally, making sad havoc with the original melodies, some of which are sweet and plaintive. The dancing is even more strange, and less interesting than the music; the performers rarely raise their feet from the ground, but shuffle, or to use a more poetical, though not so expressive a phrase, glide along the floor, raising their arms, and veiling or unveiling as they advance or describe a circle. The same evolutions are repeated, with the most unvarying monotony, and are continued until the appearance of a new set of dancers gives a hint to the preceding party to withdraw. It is said that, on some occasions, the native spectators have been so much enraptured with the accomplishments displayed by a celebrated dancer, as to tear their clothes in extacy, and make the air resound with cries of "*wah! wah!*" but such enthusiastic demonstrations of delight are extremely rare. The gravity of the higher classes

of natives is usually exceedingly profound, and few compromise their dignity by giving loose to any emotion in public. In general, the audience maintains a steady imperturbability of countenance, the manifestations of pleasure being confined to the attendants of the dancers. The *mussaulchees*, as they brandish their torches, grin their approbation, looking unutterable things; and the musicians also, apparently in a state of enchantment, not only express their gratification by eloquent smiles, but break out into frequent exclamations of "*bhote! bhote!*" an almost untranslatable term, which is used to denominate excess of any thing.

The only novelty presented by the fresh band of dancers is the colour of the dress, or the value of the ornaments; the performances are precisely the same, European eyes and ears being unable to distinguish any superiority in the quality of the voice or the grace of the movements. By the natives, however, different dancers are held in different degrees of estimation; the celebrated Nickee, of Calcutta, has long held the rank of *prima donna* of the East. In India, a reputation once established is not endangered by a rage for novelty, or the attractions of younger candidates: fashions do not alter, new styles are not adopted,

and the singing of an angel, if differing from that of Nickee, would not be thought half so good. She has been styled the Catalani of Hindostan; she is now the Pasta, and will be the Sontag, or the Malibran who may next arise to delight the European world. Some English singers of eminence performing at Calcutta, understanding that the king of Oude was an ardent admirer of music, travelled to Lucknow in the hope that the superior excellence of their performances would ensure them an engagement at his court. They were disappointed; they had neither the power of lungs, nor the faculty of screaming, necessary to lap native ears in Elysium, and the experiment failed.

A *nautch* given by a great person generally concludes with an exhibition of fire-works, a spectacle in which native artists excel, and which affords a very acceptable gratification to eyes wearied with the dull sameness of the dancers. Many of the *nautch* girls are extremely rich, those most in esteem being very highly paid for their performances: the celebrated Calcutta heroine already mentioned receives 1,000 rupees (£100) nightly, wherever she is engaged. In the presence of European ladies the dancing of the *nautch* girls is dull and decorous: but when the audience is ex-

clusively masculine, it is said to assume a different character.

The rajah of Benares not only evinces his attachment to the society of the British residents in his neighbourhood, by inviting them to his own houses, but enters also into their national amusements, frequently attending the amateur performances at the theatre at Secrole. A gentleman attached to the Mint, whose loss will be long and severely felt by every branch of the community, anxious both to afford gratification to his native friends, and to increase the funds of a treasury, which in India as well as in England is seldom overflowing, was wont to take the pains to translate the drama about to be performed into Persian, and to have the MS. printed at a press which he had established. Thus made acquainted with the subject of the story, the acted play afforded amusement to many of the rich inhabitants of Benares, who subscribed very liberally to the support of the theatre. It is doubtful whether so good an example has been followed by the present management, the conciliation and gratification of the natives being too little studied in India; but the Benares theatre is distinguished for the introduction of performances better adapted to amateur actors than

the regular drama. Charades and proverbs have diversified the usual entertainments, and the reunions, first established at this station, have become popular at Calcutta. The *tableaux vivants*, though so well suited to the peculiarities of the country, and permitting the introduction of ladies without offending prejudices, have not yet found their way to the Company's territories: so averse are the Anglo-Indians to innovations of any kind

In no part of Hindostan can one of the most beautiful of the native festivals be seen to so great an advantage as at Benares. The *duwăllee* is celebrated there with the greatest splendour, and its magnificence is heightened by the situation of the city on the bank of the river, and the singular outlines of the buildings. The attraction of this annual festival consists in the illuminations: at the close of evening, small *chiraugs* (earthen lamps), fed with oil which produces a brilliant white light, are placed, as closely together as possible, on every ledge of every building. Palace, temple, and tower seemed formed of stars. The city appears like the creation of the fire-king, the view from the water affording the most superb and romantic spectacle imaginable,—a scene of fairy splendour, far too brilliant for description. Europeans embark in

boats to enjoy the gorgeous pageant from the river; all the vessels are lighted up, and the buildings in the distance, covered with innumerable lamps, shine out in radiant beauty. European illuminations, with their coloured lamps, their transparencies, their crowns, stars, and initial letters, appear paltry when compared to the chaste grandeur of the Indian mode; the outlines of a whole city are marked in streams of fire, and the corruscations of light shoot up into the dark blue sky above, and tremble in long undulations on the rippling waves below. According to the native idea, every thing that prospers on the evening of the *duwāllee* will be sure to prosper throughout the year. Gamblers try their luck, and if they should be successful, pursue their fortune with redoubled confidence. Thieves also, anxious to secure an abundant supply of booty, labour diligently on this evening in their vocation; while others eat, drink, and are merry, in order that they may spend the ensuing period joyously.

This festival is instituted in honour of *Luchmee*, the goddess of wealth, and those who are anxiously desirous to obtain good fortune, seek for two things on the night of its celebration: the flowers of the *goolur*, a tree which bears fruit but never blos-

soms; and the soul of a snake, an animal which is supposed to deposit its spirit occasionally under a tree.

The Hindoo servants of an Anglo-Indian establishment, when this festival comes round, offer little presents of sweetmeats and toys to those members of the family who they think will condescend to accept them, the children and younger branches. Many of these toys are idols of various descriptions, which, before they are consecrated, may be appropriated to purposes unconnected with their original destination. Benares is particularly famous for the manufacture of wooden and earthen playthings, which are seen indiscriminately in the temples and in the hands of European children; there are others, however, which are never used for any religious purpose, and amongst these are effigies of European ladies and gentlemen, seated upon elephants, or taking the air in buggies; all very inferior to the Calcutta toys, which are made of paper, and which give very accurate imitations of those things which they are intended to represent: elephants, a foot high, coloured according to nature, are provided with trunks which move with every breath; and birds in cages are suspended by such slight threads, that they appear to be alive, the most deli-

cate touch setting them in motion. The Calcutta artists are also very expert in moulding reptiles in wax, which seem to be possessed of vitality, and occasion much alarm to persons who entertain a horror of creeping things.

The whole of the Moosulmaun population are abroad to witness the superb spectacle produced by the blaze of light which flames from every Hindoo building at the *duwăllee*, and the festival being one of a very peaceable description, goes off without broil or bloodshed—and what is still more extraordinary, without occasioning the conflagration of half the houses; but the brahmins have not always permitted the profanation of the holy city by the bigots of another creed, to pass unmarked by an attempt to expel the intruders. Benares has been the scene of numerous and desperate struggles between the Moslems and Hindoos. The sacred bulls have been slaughtered in the streets by the one party, and swine slain in the mosques by the other, and were it not for the extreme vigilance exercised by the British government, these mutual outrages would be continually renewed. The Jains, a peculiar sect of Hindoos, who carry their veneration for animals to a very outrageous length, have a temple at Benares, which is also

the residence of several Mahratta families, who differ from their Hindoo brethren in having refused to immure their wives and daughters, after the example of the Moslem conquerors of India. The Mahratta ladies enjoy perfect freedom in their own country, and though they may not shock the prejudices of the citizens of Benares by appearing publicly in the streets, they look out from their terraces and house-tops unveiled, not even retreating from the gaze of European spectators. Benares forms the head-quarters of the religious mendicants, who swarm all over India; some of these devotees are distinguished only by their disgusting filth, an indisputable mark of sanctity; while others attain a wretched pre-eminence by the frightful tortures which they inflict upon themselves. Hitherto, the efforts of the most zealous missionaries have failed to persuade many of the fanatic worshippers of Benares to quit the shrines of their idols, and to the slow progress which education is making in the East, we can alone trust for the extirpation of that horrid system of religion, which is so revolting to the Christian dwellers of the land.

The cantonment of Secrole is possessed of a handsome church, very elegantly fitted up in the

interior, and large enough to accommodate all the Protestant inhabitants of the station. Here, however, as at other places in India, not even excepting Calcutta, the lower offices are served by Pagans, Hindoo bearers being employed to pull the *punkahs* and to open the pew-doors. No one appears to be at all scandalized by the presence of these men, though, as the service is performed in a language with which they are wholly unacquainted, there can be no hope that their attendance will lead to their conversion, and it seems very extraordinary that the few Christians necessary to keep the church in order, should either not be found or not be employed for that purpose. The church compound (as it is called), during evening service, which is always performed by candlelight, exhibits the usual bustle and animation attendant upon every assemblage of Anglo-Indians. Vehicles of all descriptions are waiting outside, and the grooms, chuprassies, bearers, and other attendants, muster in considerable numbers. Within, in the cold season, when *punkahs* are not required, there is little or nothing to remind the congregation that they are breathing their orisons in a foreign and a heathen land; but when the porch is gained, the turbaned population around, the pagodas in the

distance, and the elephants and camels which wend their way across the plains, display a scene so different from that presented in the quiet neighbourhood of a country church-yard at home, that the pleasing delusion can be cherished no longer.

CHAPTER X.

TRAVELLING:—THE BUDGEROW.

THERE is scarcely any season of the year in which Anglo-Indians do not avail themselves of the grand water-privilege, as our American friends would term it, offered by the Ganges; but at the dangerous period,—that of the rains,—when the river is full, and its mighty current comes rushing down with the most fearful velocity, its voyagers are multiplied, partly in consequence of the difficulty of traversing the country by land, and partly on account of the hope that may be entertained of a quick passage; the navigation being more speedy than when the river is low, and its waters comparatively sluggish. In proceeding up the Ganges at the commencement of the rains, the general steadiness of the wind, usually blowing from a favourable point, enables the ascending vessels to stem the current by means of their sails; but should the breeze fail, which is frequently the case, or prove adverse—a not unlikely contingency—the

boatmen are compelled to undergo the tedious process of tracking, in some instances not being able to drag the vessel beyond a couple of miles in the course of a long and fatiguing day's work. The progress down the river is much more rapid, the swiftness of the descent being sometimes perfectly frightful: boats are absolutely whirled along, and if, while forced at an almost inconceivable rate by the impetuosity of the current, they should strike against the keel of a former wreck, or come in contact with some of the numerous trees and other huge fragments, victims of the devouring wave, destruction is inevitable. The boat sinks at once, and the crew and passengers have little chance of escaping with their lives, unless at the moment of the concussion they jump into the river, and are able to swim to shore. The crazy and ill-appointed state of the greater portion of the vessels which navigate the Ganges, render it surprising that so little loss of life should be sustained from the vast multitudes who entrust themselves to such fragile conveyances, upon a river which, when swelled by mountain floods, and vexed by ruffling gales, comes raging and roaring like a sea. It is seldom that small boats are attached to the larger craft, to put out in case of danger, and many persons may drown

in the sight of a large fleet, without the possibility of being picked up.

Notwithstanding these and other drawbacks nearly as formidable, families proceeding to and from the Upper Provinces, generally prefer the river to any other mode of travelling, since, during the rains, though not the safest, it is by far the most practicable. Fresh arrivals, from Europe especially, find it easier to visit the places of their destination in the interior by water than by land; the necessary preparations are less extensive, and the fatigue and trouble of the journey greatly diminished.

The safest, and the most commodious kind of vessel, with respect to its interior arrangements, is a pinnace, but it is not so well calculated to pass the shallows and sand-banks of an ever-shifting stream, as the more clumsy and less secure *budgerow*. This boat, whose name is a native corruption of the word *barge*, is, therefore, usually chosen by European travellers, to whom time and expense are objects of importance. Though, to a certain extent, the term *clumsy* may fairly be applied to a budgerow, its construction and appearance are far from inelegant; with a little more painting and gilding, a few silken sails and streamers, and

divested of the four-footed outside passengers and other incumbrances on the roof, it would make a very beautiful object in a picture, and in its present state it has the advantage of being exceedingly picturesque. The greater part of the lower deck is occupied by a range of apartments fitted up for the accommodation of the party engaging the boat; these are generally divided into a sleeping and a sitting room, with an enclosed verandah in front, which serves to keep off the sun, and to stow away various articles of domestic furniture. The apartments are surrounded on all sides by venetians, which exclude the sun in the day-time, and let in the air at night; and by those who are aware of the different kinds of annoyances to be guarded against in river-travelling, they may be rendered extremely comfortable. The addition of *chicks*, blinds made of bamboo split very fine, to be unrolled when the *ghil mills*, as the venetians are called, are opened, would prevent the invasions of those numerous armies of insects which, after sunset, infest the cabins; and those who do not consider rats desirable guests, will do well to provide themselves with a staunch terrier dog, or a couple of good cats, otherwise they may expect to be overrun with vermin, to the great increase of

dirt and bad smells, and to the destruction of clothes and the supplies for the table. In front of the cabins, the deck is of circumscribed dimensions, affording only space for the boatmen, who, on descending the river, facilitate the progress of the vessel by means of long sweeps; the upper deck, therefore, or roof, is the chief resort of the crew and the servants. At the stern the helmsman stands, perched aloft, guiding a huge rudder; the *goleer*, stationed at the prow, ascertains the depth of the water by means of a long oar; and, when the wind will permit, two large square sails are hoisted, with the assistance of which the lumbering vessel goes rapidly through the water. In addition to the furniture for the cabins, sea (or rather river) stock must be procured, consisting of groceries of all kinds, wine, beer, and brandy, salt provisions, tongues, hams, tamarind-fish,* flour, biscuits, and charcoal; a dozen or two of live fowls and ducks, and a couple of milch goats.

As the budgerow is not calculated for a heavy or cumbrous freight, a baggage-boat is necessary for the conveyance of the goods and chattels of the party, and for the accommodation of those servants who cannot be conveniently retained on board the

* Fish cured with the acid juice of the tamarind.

superior vessel. These boats are usually of the most dangerous description, and the number of accidents continually occurring to them, the destruction of property which, even if fished up from the depths of the Ganges, is totally spoiled, and the constant anxiety and alarm they occasion, would in almost any other country deter persons from hiring such ricketty conveyances; but it is the custom to imperil the most valuable effects in this manner, and they are abandoned to the tender mercies of the winds and waves.

A *dinghee*, or wherry, is a very essential adjunct to river-navigation, but it is not always to be procured, and when one of these light skiffs cannot be attached to the larger craft, the communication between the cook-boat and the budgerow is frequently cut off. The former vessels are usually very heavy sailers (how they manage to get on at all, with their canvass in as ragged a condition as the pocket handkerchief of Sylvester Daggerwood, is the wonder), and they are consequently often left at a long distance behind at the arrival of the hour of dinner. The unhappy passengers in the budgerow, after waiting in vain for the smoking supplies they had anxiously expected, are compelled to be satisfied with a less substantial meal of coffee, eggs, dried

fish, or any thing else that their lockers may afford. Few persons venture to move after sunset, both on account of the dangers of the navigation from the numerous shoals and other obstructions, and the increased expense, as it would be necessary to engage a double set of boatmen, the ordinary number being insufficient for the performance of extra duties. At daybreak in the morning, the vessel is usually pushed out into the stream, spreading her sails like those of "a wild swan in its flight," or proceeding more leisurely by the united exertions of sixteen men dragging at a rope fastened at the mast-head; breakfast is laid in the outer room, and is well supplied with luxurious fare. The bread may be a little stale or a little mouldy, for the damp atmosphere of the rains is not very favourable to the staff of life, which can only be procured, in the European form, at European stations. A very good substitute, however, is offered by freshly-baked *chupatties*, of which the native servants fabricate several kinds, some resembling crumpets, others the thick griddle cakes of Ireland, while a third are counterparts of the Scottish scones. Milk purchased at the neighbouring villages is churned into butter; the tea-kettle sings merrily on a tripod fed with charcoal placed upon the deck, and there

is no want of fresh and dried fish, omelettes, and kedgeree; whether the usual fricassees and grills can be added must depend upon the state of the live stock, and the chances of procuring fresh supplies before the vessel can reach a well-furnished bazaar. At the Hindoo villages, there is nothing to be had except milk, pulse, fruit, and vegetables, and sometimes a few eggs. From the Mocsulman inhabitants, a more generous and substantial kind of provant can be obtained, chiefly consisting of poultry, it being seldom worth their while to fatten sheep for chance passengers, especially at a season in which it is impossible to keep fresh provisions for more than a day: whatever is killed in the morning must be eaten before night, and the method usually employed by the *khidmutghars*, in clearing the dinner-table, is to empty the contents of the dishes into the river.

The *dandies*, or boatmen, though frequently belonging to the lowest castes of Hindoos, will not touch a morsel of the food which comes from a Christian board. Some of the sweepers, a set of persons who enjoy perfect liberty of conscience in all matters in which dirt and filth are concerned, will not contaminate themselves with the joint, though untouched, which has been served up to

their European masters; others less scrupulous will eat any thing; but the degree of horror entertained by the mere refuse of the people, of the pollution contracted by swallowing the remnants of a Christian feast, could scarcely be credited by those who have not witnessed the strange effects of religious prejudices in India. The writer has seen the veriest outcasts—men who would steal, kill, and eat those unclean animals, the domestic pigs of a native village,—which the devourers of more orthodox pork hold in abomination,—refuse the finest meat which had figured at the budgerow-table, preferring the impure repast dishonestly obtained, to the defilement of roasts and boils from Christian cooking-pots.

After the breakfast has been cleared away, those persons who entertain any regard for their eyes or their complexions, will fasten the venetians, and darkening the boat as much as possible, employ themselves in reading, writing, or working. But strangers find it difficult to abstain from the contemplation of the novel and wondrous scenes around them. The broad and sparkling river is covered with objects of interest and attraction. In some parts of the Ganges, every wave appears to bring with it clusters and coronets of the largest and

most beautiful flowers: so numerous are the garlands which the worshippers of the deity of the stream throw into its glittering waters. The rich and luxuriant clusters of the lotus float down in quick succession upon the silvery current; and a vivid imagination may fancy the young god Camdeo nestling amid the silken leaves of his roseate couch.* Nor is it the sacred lotus alone which embellishes the wavelets of the Ganges; large white, yellow, and scarlet flowers pay an equal tribute; and the prows of the numerous native vessels navigating the stream are garlanded by long wreaths of the most brilliant daughters of the parterre. India may be called a paradise of flowers; the most beautiful lilies grow spontaneously on the sandy shores of the rivers, and from every projecting cliff some blossoming shrub dips its flowrets in the wave below.

In tracking, the budgerow is frequently not more than a yard or two from the water's edge, and nothing can be more gratifying to the eye than the moving panorama which the scenery of the Ganges exhibits. One of the most striking and

* The writer was constantly reminded of Pickersgill's beautiful picture of Camdeo floating down the Ganges on a lotus.

magnificent features of an Indian river is the ghaut. The smallest villages on the banks of the Ganges possess landing-places, which we vainly seek in the richest and most populous parts of Europe. The Anglo-Indian, landing upon the English coast, is struck with the meanness of the dirty wooden stair-cases which meet his eye at Falmouth, Plymouth, and other places of equal note and importance. In India, wherever a town occurs in the vicinity of a river, a superb and spacious ghaut is constructed for the accommodation of the inhabitants: the material is sometimes granite, but more frequently well-tempered and highly polished *chunam*. From an ample terrace, at the summit of the bank, broad steps descend into the river, inclosed on either side by handsome balustrades. These are not unfrequently flanked with beautiful temples, mosques, or pagodas, according to the creed of the founders; or the ghaut is approached through a cloistered quadrangle, having the religious edifice in the centre. The banian and the peepul fling their sacred branches over the richly-carved minarets and pointed domes, and those in the Brahminee villages are crowded with troops of monkies, whose grotesque and diverting antics contrast strangely with the

devotional attitudes of the holy multitudes performing their orisons in the stream.

Nothing can be more animated than an Indian ghaut; at scarcely any period of the day is it destitute of groupes of bathers, while graceful female forms are continually passing and repassing, loaded with water-pots, which are balanced with the nicest precision on their heads. The ghaut, with its cheerful assemblage, disappears, and is succeeded by some lofty overhanging cliff wooded to the top, and crowned with one of those beautiful specimens of oriental architecture scattered with rich profusion over the whole country. Green vistas next are seen, giving glimpses of rustic villages in the distance, and winding alleys of so quiet a character, that the passer-by may fancy that these sequestered lanes lead to the cottage-homes of England, —a brief illusion speedily dissipated by the appearance of some immense herd of buffaloes, either wallowing in the mud, with their horns and the tips of their noses alone out of the water, or proceeding leisurely to the river's edge, which, when gained, is quitted for the stream. A mighty plunge ensues, as the whole troop betake themselves to the water, stemming its rapid current with stout

shoulders. One or two of the leaders bear the herdsmen on their necks; very little of the forms of these men are visible, and their temerity in entrusting themselves to so wild a looking animal, and to so wide a waste of waters, excites surprise to unaccustomed eyes.

The savage herds are left behind, and the scene changes again; deep forests are passed, whose unfathomable recesses lie concealed in eternal shade; then cultivation returns; wide pastures are spread along the shore covered with innumerable herds; the gigantic elephant is seen under a tree, fanning off the flies with a branch of palm, or pacing along, bearing his master in a *howdah* through the indigo plantations. European dwellings arise in the midst of park-like scenery, and presently the wild barbaric pomp of a native city bursts upon the astonished eye. Though the general character of the country is flat, the undulations occurring on the banks of the Ganges are quite sufficient to redeem the scenery from the charge of sameness or monotony. High and abrupt promontories diversify the plain; when the river is full, the boat frequently glides beneath beetling cliffs, crowned with the crumbling remnants of some half-ruined village, whose toppling houses are momentarily threatened

with destruction; or covered with the eyries of innumerable birds, and tapestried with wild creepers, which fling their magnificent garlands down to the sands below. Other steeps are clothed with umbrageous foliage, and between the trees glimpses are caught of superb flights of stairs, the approach from the water to some beautiful pagoda peeping out upon the summit, the habitation and the temple of a Brahmin, who occupies himself solely in prayer, and in weaving garlands, part of which he devotes to the altars which he serves, and part to the bright and flowing river. These exquisite buildings occur in the most lonely situations, apparently far from the dwellings of man, and the innumerable varieties of birds, some flying in large flocks, and others stalking solitarily along the reedy shore, will at all times compensate for the absence of objects of greater importance.

The reputation for splendour of the Anglo-Indian style of living appears to be fully borne out by the grandeur of the display made upon the banks of the Hooghly. The European towns which grace the shore are superb; palace succeeds to palace as the boat passes Ishara, Barrackpore, and its opposite neighbour Serampore, whose broad and beautiful esplanade presents one of the finest archi-

tectural landscapes imaginable; luxuriant gardens intervene between magnificent houses; some shaded with forest trees, others spreading their terraced fronts and pillared verandahs in the full glow of an eastern sun. The French settlement of Chandernagore, a little higher up, only inferior to its Danish neighbour, offers a less striking and imposing front, and though boasting houses of equal splendour, does not appear to so much advantage from the river, while Chinsurah, at a short distance, is infinitely more picturesque. Smaller habitations attract the eye, perched upon the summits of crags richly wreathed with multitudes of creeping plants, and through numerous openings between these lovely cliffs, blooming labyrinths appear, which have all the charms the imagination imparts to beauties only half revealed.

The character given to the scenery by the continued recurrence of those stately mansions, which seem more fitted for the residences of princes than for the dwellings of the civil and military servants of a company of merchants, is not entirely lost until after the budgerow has passed Moorshedabad, the residence of the Nuwáb of Bengal, a distance of 139 miles from Calcutta. From this point the landscape assumes a wilder and more decidedly

foreign aspect. Bungalows usurp the places of palaces; fortresses, half Asiatic, half European in their construction, project their battlemented walls into the stream; and when the ranges of the Rajmahl hills are left behind, every place and building of importance is of native origin. However cheering the sight of a European cantonment may be in its promise of replenishing the larder, and the prospect it holds out of social pleasures, the hideous shapes of those gigantic mounds, which look like overgrown haystacks covered with thatch, are quite sufficient to destroy the effect of the surrounding objects. Out of the numberless bungalows which disfigure the face of British India, very few, and those only which are partly built of stone, and nearly hidden in embowering groves, are in the slightest degree picturesque; and scarcely one can, under any circumstances, be introduced into a drawing.

Towards the middle of the day, the boat becomes insufferably hot; both sides have received the fierce glare of a burning sun; the heat is reflected from the water, which is now too dazzling for the eye to endure without pain; the morning breeze dies away, and it requires all the patience of a martyr to sustain the torments inflicted by the scorching

atmosphere, especially as the roofs of the cabins are usually too low to allow a *punkah* to be hung. As the sun declines, the boat gradually cools down to a more agreeable temperature; and when the welcome shadows of the woods descend upon the deck, it is delightful to sit in the open air and watch the progress of the vessel, as it nears the shore, to the spot appointed as its station for the night. The moment that the budgerow is securely moored, a very active and animated scene commences: the domestics, whose services are not required on board, and all the crew, immediately disembark; fires are kindled for the various messes; those who are anxious for quiet and seclusion, light up their faggots at a considerable distance from the boat. The rich back-ground of dark trees, the blazing fires, the picturesque groups assembled round them, and the tranquil river below, its crystal surface crimson with the red glow of an Indian sunset, or the fleeting tint fading away, and leaving only the bright broad river,—molten silver, or polished steel, as the dark shadows of the night advance,—form an evening landscape always pleasing and varying with the varying scenery of the ever-changing bank.

While the cloth is laying in the cabin for dinner, the Europeans of the party usually walk

along the sands of the river, or penetrate a short distance into the interior, sometimes passing through fields of indigo, or plantations of cotton, whose bursting pods strew the pathways; at others pausing to admire the feathery appearance of a beautiful species of grain, which resembles the snowy plumes of the ostrich, and, rising to the height of several feet, produces a magnificent effect as it is undulated by the passing breeze. The cultivated places are watched by vigilant guardians, whose duty it is to protect them from the incursions and depredations of men and beasts. At night, these persons frequently nestle like birds in the branches of the trees, some of the more luxurious having their *charpoys* (bedsteads) fastened on convenient boughs; in the day-time, they are either perched up in a small wooden watch-tower, which, as they always sit, or rather squat, looks like the upper half of a sentry-box, raised upon a scaffold of bamboo; or, mounted on a broken-down tattoo, and armed with a long lance, they ride round their employer's territories, very much in the style of Don Quixote or a Cossack.

It is curious to observe how very little accommodation is necessary to secure the comfort of a native in these happy climes; while Europeans are

expiring with heat, the enjoyment of the Indian is unalloyed; he lives in the open air, cooks his simple meal of pulse and vegetables under a tree, and sleeps in a hut of straw scarcely large enough to contain his body. The pedestrian frequently comes upon one of these wigwams, for they are nothing more, and they seem to be favourite abodes, since gardeners in European families, who might be much better lodged, are fond of making a lair for themselves in some sequestered spot in the scene of their daily labours. A few branches are wattled together over-head, a screen of reeds placed in the direction of the wind, the earth is swept scrupulously clean, and the bed, a simple frame-work of bamboo laced together in a very ingenious manner with cord, does not look uninviting. If the heat of the day could be borne with impunity, this kind of sylvan life, realizing the romantic notions of early youth, the forest wanderings so often indulged in fancy, would be very delightful, especially where rich and nutritious fruits, some produced without cultivation and others by the lightest labour, hang temptingly within reach.

Night, always beautiful in India, assumes a still more lovely aspect when it spreads its soft veil over

the voyagers on a river; the stars, which come shining forth along the deep blue sky, inlay the waters beneath with glittering ingots; the flowers give out their most delicious odours, and rock and tree, hut and temple, are invested with a double charm. Sleep, however, does not often deign to light upon the lids of those who voyage up the river in a budgerow. The roof is crowded with two-legged and four-footed animals, whose stamping, barking, snoring, and coughing, continue without intermission through the night. The nasal power of the natives is very extraordinary: a story is related of an officer, who, irritated to madness by the midnight serenades of his hard-breathing brethren, rushed, in his *robe de chambre*, sword in hand, to the deck, and scattered the party by forcing them to betake to the water to avoid his murderous weapon. But though these enemies of repose were put to flight, others equally formidable remained; troops of jackals approach to the river's brink and pierce the air with their yells, which continue until long after midnight; doleful birds utter strange and savage cries, which come in startling loudness on the ear. The scrambling of rats up the venetians, which they use as ladders, and their races over the bed, if not provided with

musquito-curtains, though not so uproarious, do not less effectually disturb the slumbers, and the stings of insects, which even the musquito-curtains fail to keep out, render the couch any thing but a place of rest. In fact, an eastern night is more pleasing to the eye than to the other senses, and as its enjoyments are almost wholly confined to the open air, it is wonderful that Anglo-Indians have not adopted the custom of sleeping through the day (which is comparatively quiet), in rooms cooled and darkened, and employing the less sultry but more noisy hours of the night in the pursuit of business or amusement.

Hitherto, we have only contemplated the Ganges under its most favourable aspect; there is, unfortunately, a reverse to the picture. One of the least misfortunes which the navigators may be doomed to suffer, is that of sticking on a sand-bank in the centre of the stream; when rain is added to the disaster, the day thus spent is dreary indeed, as there is nothing except the venetians to keep out the pelting of the pitiless storm; and as these blinds, though shutting tolerably closely, present numerous crevices, the weather side of the cabin cannot, by any possibility, be kept dry

The cook-boat is probably in the same predicament, but at too great a distance to render the *khansamah's* toils available; consequently, the party must be content to relinquish the hopes of a repast, which the writer recollects having looked for with great relish, in consequence of a scanty *tiffin*. As misfortunes come in troops, there may be (for painful experience has suggested the possibility;) no charcoal on board, and the tea and coffee must depend upon the chance of procuring wood from the boatmen, who seldom lay in much stock, unless they happen to have stolen in the course of a day's tracking more than has sufficed for the day's consumption. Those who contemplate a voyage will do well to remember always to have one goat at least on board, a handsome supply of charcoal, and no lack of flour, for upon these things the comfort of a party will often depend. The poor starving crew are objects of great pity; it is not until they have been working hard for hours, nearly up to their necks in water, that they abandon the vain endeavour to get the boat off; they are thoroughly wet, and have still less means of satisfying their hunger than the passengers, the religion of the greater part not permitting them to prepare their meals on board. Few, in these

extreme cases, refuse a little brandy, under the name of medicine, which, as they object to drink out of a glass which has been used by an European, is poured into the palms of their hands. The rain, though disagreeable, offers the prospect of a speedier release than would be effected without the change it produces in the height of the river. The stream, swollen by torrents, floats the vessel, and, proceeding on her course, the sand-bank is left behind. The faithful domestics in the cooking-boat make incredible efforts to supply their employers with a meal which shall banish the remembrance of the late fast: the instant they espy their master's vessel, they strive, by all sorts of contrivances, to gain it; should the place which they have reached be too shallow for sailing, they will wade for nearly a mile with the dishes held above their heads; and never can that duck be forgotten, which, destined to figure as the principal roast at a table curtailed of its animal viands by a tedious progress from the last bazaar, was considerately hashed the next day by the presiding genius of the kitchen, and made its appearance hot, after a long abstinence from the good things of this world.

The occurrence of those squalls, denominated

north-westers, forms another serious drawback to the pleasures of river navigation; they come on so suddenly, and with so little previous intimation, that if many boats should be assembled together, it is seldom that they sweep across the broad estuaries formed by the Ganges during the floods, without bringing death in their train. On one memorable day, when the whole surface of the sparkling waters was covered with budgerows and country craft, which had put out with a favourable breeze from Monghyr, and rounded the projecting walls of its fortress in safety, these summer barks were surprised by a tornado; the sky was obscured, the whole surface of the water became dark and troubled, the vessels tossed to and fro upon the rushing waves, rocked and reeled—but the danger was only momentary; those who possessed expert navigators pulled down their sails and ran under the shore, while others, less fortunate, left to the mercy of the winds, were driven at random into the whirlpool; some were swamped and others were seen carried down by the current, the thatched awning, or chopper, as it is called, of the *pattalahs* being only visible (the crews clinging to the top) above the water. The storm passing away as quickly as it had approached, the river subsided

with equal rapidity; but no fleet was now visible, it had been dispersed in all directions, and the ravages of this brief hurricane were made known by masts, rudders, and the more ghastly forms of drowned men, floating down the stream. These traces of the late fearful turbulence speedily vanished; vessels which had escaped the danger, hoisted their sails to gentle zephyrs, which wafted them over seas of glass scarcely agitated by the slightest ruffle.

The sudden changes of the wind which take place during the rainy season, are still more dangerous when a gale has been blowing steadily for several days up the river, forcing the waters back. Should it veer round in a moment, which too frequently happens, the chained billows break loose, rising to a mountainous height; wave follows upon wave, each more tremendous than the last; the Ganges assumes the appearance of a mighty ocean lashed into fury by the winds of a thousand caves; whole villages are overwhelmed; lofty cliffs, undermined by the swelling surges, fall in with horrid crashes, and the scene of devastation produced by this wild warfare of the elements is beyond description frightful. Often, when moored during the heavy gales to the shore, the boats pull against the

ropes, which are fastened to stakes fixed into the ground, in the most alarming manner; should the cables give way, destruction is almost certain; away go the vessels (sometimes upset in the *melée*) into the middle of the stream; darkness increases the danger, and the greater part of those who are not so fortunate as to reach the shore on the first alarm, must inevitably perish.

Another disagreeable but not dangerous casualty, which sometimes occurs in proceeding up the river, is the detention from contrary winds in some place, where a bluff promontory, rising perpendicularly from the water, will not admit of a towing-path. There is no alternative but to await a change of weather; oars and sweeps are alike useless in contending against the force of the current; and light boats, manned by four-and-twenty stout rowers, are baffled and driven back in attempting to stem the tide, which comes rushing round a protruding point. The influx of waters at Buxar is tremendous; even the propelling power of steam seems to be set at nought by the giant strength of the Ganges when putting forth all its energies. At Jungheera, a bold and picturesque rock rising from the centre of the river, the current seems to concentrate its power, darting like an arrow from a

bow, and driving onwards with the impetuosity of a race-horse; boats are engulphed in the fearful vortex formed by the raging waters, and when the river is full, it is only a strong wind which can enable vessels to struggle successfully against the overpowering vehemence of the torrent.

It requires no inconsiderable share of patience to endure the annoyance of being wind-bound, especially when this circumstance occurs at such a place as Peer Pointee, which, though favoured by nature with very picturesque scenery, is peculiarly destitute of the means of supporting life. The frugal Hindoos, inhabitants of the districts at the foot of the Rajmahl Hills, have little to offer beyond rice and vegetables; fowls are to them objects of veneration, and there is difficulty in procuring a few eggs from persons who are content to live entirely without animal food. Sportsmen may recruit the larder with game, though at a season in which the waters are out in every direction, and the tanks and jheels are the haunts of alligators, it is by no means desirable to roam the jungles in search of a dinner.

A ten days' sojourn at Peer Pointee sufficed to give the writer a thorough acquaintance with all the delectabilities of being stationary at an obscure

village on the banks of the Ganges. The scenery was beautiful, and the legends connected with the Moosulmanee tombs erected on the summits of the neighbouring eminences, were sufficiently romantic to interest travellers delighting in such lore. The early history of the saintly soldiers, who propagated the creed of their prophet with fire and sword through the uttermost parts of Bengal, has been obscured by the various revolutions which succeeded the triumphs of the Moghuls under their ancient leaders. We learn the names of few of those tenants of the grave, whose mausoleums alone remain to shew the extent of their conquests; their proselytes have relapsed into idolatry, and the care of those stately tombs, which have survived the lapse of years, has been left to a miserable remnant of the faithful, vagrant *faqeers*, who profess to divide their guardianship with that of tigers, which, according to their account, every Thursday night stand sentinel over the remains of the mighty dead.

The monuments at Sicligully and the neighbouring hills have a fort-like appearance; they are surrounded by bastioned walls, and arise on spots cleared of wood on the summits of these eminences: they command fine prospects, and form of themselves

no small addition to the grandeur and interest of the scene. Objects of veneration to all the followers of Mohammed, wandering pilgrims from the remote parts of Hindostan toil their painful way to perform their orisons at these sacred spots; but the devotees are too poor to keep up the ceremonials usually observed at the tombs of great men: lamps, which in the Upper Provinces burn upon the last resting-places of the humblest servants of the prophet, have long ceased to stream their beacon lights from these solitudes; yet the care with which all that could litter or pollute the sacred precincts is continually removed, shews that some pious though humble hand assists the savage genii of the scene, whose office in Bengal seems to be limited to the security of the dead from intrusion. At Secundermallee, in the Carnatic, the royal animal is said to shew still greater veneration for the mouldering remains of the conquerors of the world. The natives of India rejoice in the supposition that they are possessed of the body of Alexander the Great, whose tomb on the top of a mountain is reported to be regularly swept by tigers with their tails.

During the continuance of storms, which at some periods, more especially the breaking-up of the

rains, last for several days, boats are fain to seek the shelter of some friendly creek, there to await the return of more favourable weather. The patience of the natives in these predicaments is inexhaustible; they, it is true, have more resources at hand than the unfortunate Europeans, who see no prospect of procuring fresh supplies; the bazaar, though it may be of the meanest description, furnishes them with food and gossip. To lounge in the corners of the market-places, discussing the prices of grain and ghee, seems to be the acmé of felicity to an Indian. It is quite as easy to persuade the boat's-crew of a man-of-war to quit the delights of the tap-room, as to induce the people belonging to a budgerow to leave the scene of their greatest enjoyment. Often, when a favourable wind springs up, a delay of several hours takes place before the servants and boatmen can be collected together. To impetuous dispositions it is exceedingly irritating to see how imperturbably calm they will sit, perched upon the driest bits of ground, smoking their hubble-bubbles, or discoursing upon some such interesting topic as that before-mentioned, while the half-distracted European, their master, is fretting and chafing at the inexorable elements. Should this fiery temperament be too frequently

permitted to break forth, the chances are much in favour of the desertion of the whole of the boat's-crew, in places where it is difficult or perhaps impracticable to procure people to engage in the service. Excepting where the dandies are turbulent, drunken, or incorrigibly lazy,—cases which do not often occur,—it is advisable to interfere with them as seldom as possible.

Gentlemen, who have had a little experience in boating in England, are apt to take the command out of the hands of the *māānjee*, or captain, and the consequences are often fatal; the vessels are lost through the mismanagement of presumptuous persons totally unacquainted with the peculiarities of the Ganges, and the method of navigation which, though strange and apparently uncouth, is much safer than those modern and scientific arts, which, however excellent in themselves, are not fitted for Indian boats and Indian rivers. The natives generally contrive to extricate their vessels from the numerous difficulties which they continually encounter, and except in some extraordinary hurricane in which neither human skill nor human strength could avail, the wrecks of budgerows which take place may generally be traced to the folly of those Europeans, who fancy

that nothing can be done well which is contrary to established practice at home, and who never miss an opportunity, however unseasonable, of compelling others to adopt their modes and customs.

From the bazaars belonging to native villages the common products of the country are the only vegetables that can be obtained; these consist of two or three species of yams, many kinds of gourds, the *brinjhal*, of which a small variety is known in England under the name of the egg-plant, the *ramterye*, pods filled with small white seeds like pearls, which if they could be divested of their glutinous property would be delicious, red spinach, and several kinds of greens. At large European stations, exotic productions are purchasable; and there is a very pleasing relic of the old hospitality of India still remaining, that of sending fruit and vegetables as presents to boats containing European travellers. When the parties have any acquaintance at a station, ample supplies of bread, butter, and meat are added; but the navigators of the Ganges have grown too numerous to admit of the indiscriminate bounty formerly shewn to all strangers, by residents on the river's banks. In wild and unfrequented places, invitations are still sent addressed to the "gentleman in the budgerow,"

whose name is unknown to the settled inhabitant "on hospitable thoughts intent," and no deserving persons can remain long in India without possessing themselves of valuable friends, made by some chance collision in travelling through the country.

CHAPTER XI.

THE THUGS OF THE DOOAB.

THE exploits of banditti, their mode of obtaining plunder, their habits and manners, whether represented on the stage, or described in narratives, either real or fictitious, have ever proved highly attractive to all classes of persons. Murders, in addition to the thrilling excitement which their discovery always produces, are invested with new and deeper interest when perpetrated by a band of men connected with each other by peculiar laws, and seeking the destruction of human life with the same avidity and indifference to its waste, which actuate the hunter in his pursuit of the beasts of the field, in realms where subsistence is alone afforded by the chase. Hitherto Spain, Germany, and Italy, have been the favourite theatres for the achievements of robbers, and it would seem scarcely possible that plans more systematic and barbarous than those adopted by the celebrated Gasparoni and his associates, in the neighbourhood of Rome, should ever

be developed to the shuddering eye. It is now, however, proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Hindostan yearly sends forth hordes of practised murderers, who pursue their fearful trade with the most deliberate coolness, constantly upon the watch for fresh victims, and taking many lives for the sake of some trifling spoil.

Although, during a considerable period, the existence of Thugs (as they are called, from their dexterity in strangling) was suspected, the ideas formed concerning them were extremely vague and uncertain. Reports went abroad of the fate of travellers ensnared, while walking or riding upon the road, by a silken noose thrown over their heads, in the manner of the *lasso*, and the perpetrators were supposed to be isolated individuals infesting the wild and less frequented parts of India. Many persons imagined that these atrocities were confined to the Rajpoot states and the kingdom of Oude, districts exhibiting scenes of outrage and bloodshed unknown to the Company's territories; but, in 1830, the apprehension of a band of depredators was the means of bringing the whole of an unparalleled system of atrocity to light, and the depositions of some of the criminals have proved that, in this instance, rumour, so far from exaggerating

the horrors of the deeds committed, has fallen short of the truth.

Thugs * or Phansegars † (as they are styled, to distinguish them from common decoits ‡) consist of a set of abandoned characters, either Moosulmans or Hindoos, of various castes, who live for a part of the year in cities or villages, apparently engaged in harmless employments. These persons resemble Freemasons, so far as they are always known to each other by some distinguishing sign. At a convenient period, the brotherhood of each district assemble together, and, being formed into bands, disperse themselves over large tracts of country, those of the Dooab moving down towards the central provinces, and in their devastating progress waylaying, robbing, and murdering every individual who has the misfortune to cross their path.

The year in the East-Indies is divided into three seasons,—the cold weather, the hot winds, and the rains. During the latter period, the country being

* *Thug*, 'villain, rascal,' in the common acceptation, but applied, in the western provinces, to stranglers on the highway.

† The literal meaning of *Phansegar* is 'hangman;' but the name is used indiscriminately with that of Thug, to designate a peculiar species of murderer.

‡ Robbers.

very widely inundated, the travelling is chiefly confined to the rivers, and it is not until the commencement of the cold season that the Phansegars make their appearance, and then they have an ample field for plunder.

The native inhabitants of India appear to be much addicted to locomotion; pleasure, business, or religion frequently calls them from home; they go to assist at a marriage, the annual fairs held at different places attract a vast concourse of persons, and the religious festivals are still more numerously attended. Sometimes a few, who are bound to the same place, form themselves into a small *kafila*, or caravan; but they more frequently travel in parties of three or four, and not seldom perform their journeys entirely alone. Each day's progress varies from ten to thirty miles, consequently very long periods are consumed in travelling, since even if the journey be not made on foot, the same cattle are employed for the whole distance, and frequent halts are necessary to recruit their strength. At night, if there should not be a convenient *serai* (a building appropriated for the reception of travellers), the wayfarers seek the shelter of a temple, or bivouac upon the plain, generally choosing the neighbourhood of a well for the site of their rude

encampment. A few sticks, gathered or purchased in the bazaar, suffice for a fire kindled on the ground, and the simple repast of rice, vegetables, or meal, being ended, each person wraps himself in the garment he may chance to possess, and lying down upon the bare earth, enjoys those slumbers which an Asiatic never appears to seek in vain.

The facilities thus offered for the commission and concealment of murder are very great. It frequently happens that, owing to the circumstances above-mentioned, the route of a stranger cannot be traced, or any particular spot fixed upon as the scene of his death, either by violence or natural means. In traversing the plains of India, travellers are exposed to many dangers unconnected with robbers; they often drink incautiously of cold water after a fatiguing march, and are seen to drop either dead or dying beside the wells. A night spent in a jungle infested with malaria is equally fatal; and there are the less common perils from the attacks of tigers and the bites of snakes to encounter. Several weeks, if not months, must necessarily elapse before the death of an individual who has quitted his home becomes possitively known, and when it has been ascertained beyond a doubt, the cause still remains a mystery, and is generally at-

tributed to fever. This statement will, in some measure, account for the absence of all inquiry concerning the fate of the numerous individuals, who, during a series of years, have been deliberately murdered by the Phansegars. It is the custom for sepoys to obtain furloughs during the hot winds, a period in which, in time of peace, few military duties are performed. These men often save large sums of money, which they carry home to their families, and numbers, supposed to have died a natural death or deserted, it is now but too certain, have fallen under the murderers' grasp. The number of bodies discovered every year, under extremely suspicious circumstances, certainly ought to have occasioned a greater degree of vigilance on the part of the civil authorities than appears to have been exercised. During 1809 and 1810, according to an official report from a very zealous servant of the East-India Company, no fewer than sixty-seven bodies were taken out of the wells in the single district of Etawah; and though we learn, by the same authority, that many persons had been apprehended, tried, and convicted for murder and highway robbery, under circumstances similar to those ascribed to the Thugs; up to 1816, much scepticism prevailed respecting the existence of a

distinct class of persons forming themselves into regular societies, and practising a peculiar species of robbery as a profession. The appalling fact that the towns and villages of the Dooab and Bundelkund (frontier provinces, divided by the Jumna) actually swarm with assassins, who, like the members of that mysterious tribunal so long the terror of Germany, mingle unsuspected with the peaceable portion of the community, is now placed beyond dispute, and in all probability the whole of Hindostan nourishes in its bosom similar hordes of practised murderers.*

The incursions of the freebooters of the Dooab have been carried on in the vast tracts lying beyond the Company's territories stretching to Ajmere; but as they have had the audacity to approach very near to the British cantonments of Mhow and Neemuch, it is but too probable that numbers of their order prowl about in search of victims in the more thickly inhabited districts. They carefully avoid the attack of Europeans, as they are well aware that their disappearance would lead to investigations of a very

* A detailed account of the system of *Thuggy* is to be found in an early volume of the Asiatic Researches; but the perusal of this work is confined to so small a circle, that few are acquainted with the information it contains.

dangerous nature. The natives are a more easy prey, and as, from the causes detailed, detection is extremely difficult, it is only by the publicity given to the atrocities committed by these miscreants, that travellers can be put upon their guard against the machinations of such artful marauders. It will be seen that the tranquil state of the country, which, since the conclusion of the Mahratta war, has been entirely free from the irruptions of the Pindarrees, and other fierce predatory tribes, has been particularly favourable to the pursuits of the Thugs; and to join themselves into large *kafilas*, and to keep regular watch, can alone secure peaceable travellers from the attacks of persons apparently as harmless as themselves.

To the spirited exertions of the political agent of Mahidpore, we are indebted for a full exposition of the system of *Thuggy*. Several individuals of a party apprehended by his orders, upon suspicion of being concerned in murders lately perpetrated, were induced to make an ample confession of their crimes. The testimony of each person corroborated that of his comrade, and the remains of the victims, stated to have been sacrificed during the last excursion, were found by a party of sepoys in the places pointed out. Copies of these deposi-

tions were sent to the offices of the district judges, and it is from these authenticated documents that the information now afforded to European readers has been extracted. It will be necessary to premise, that the accidental discovery of several dead bodies led to the detection of a large band of Phansegars, and to the establishment of the fact of their being connected with organized bodies of similar miscreants, who for a series of years had made predatory excursions, in which they had perpetrated deeds of the darkest and most sanguinary nature.

The inhabitants of the village of Bordah were alarmed one morning by a report that the mangled remains of two men, supposed to have been carried off by tigers, were lying in the road. The whole population immediately rushed out to gaze upon the dreadful spectacle: but a slight inspection sufficed to convince them that although the bodies were shockingly torn by wild beasts, they must have been previously dragged from an adjacent heap of stones; and proceeding in their search, three others were found beneath the pile, stripped and quite fresh, but neither torn nor wounded. It was then remembered that a large kafila of travellers had been observed encamped, on the preceding day, very near that spot, and that a wood-cutter,

who was passing from the jungle with a *hackery*-load of fuel, had been prevented from approaching by the command of a person in authority, who, telling him that it was an *Angraizy* (English) kafila, desired him to get his bullocks out of the way until it should pass. Information was instantly conveyed to the resident of Mahidpore, and the apprehension of the murderers took place in the manner described in the following confession, which will be found to be not less remarkable for the horrid scenes it developes than for the cool audacity of their relation.

"I am one of the band of Phansegars now in confinement, and in the village of Dehole, about eight *coss* northward of Bheelwara, was stopped with my associates as we were returning to our homes in Hindostan. At this place, a party of eight or ten *suwars* (mounted police) came upon us and said, that the *burrah sahib* ('great man,' meaning the political agent), having heard that we were carrying opium out of Malwa, had sent them to detain us; on learning this, our minds were relieved from the apprehension which their appearance occasioned. We had been once or twice searched for opium before, but none being found upon us, were allowed to proceed without molestation; we there-

fore readily consented to return to Bheelwara, as we expected to be permitted to depart as soon as it could be proved that we were not engaged in smuggling. But upon our arrival, we discovered that the party were better acquainted with our habits and pursuits than we had imagined, for the people of the town joined the *suwars* in securing our persons and preventing our escape. We, of course, loudly declared our innocence, boasting of our ability to clear ourselves whenever we should be brought before the *sahib*, and to prove satisfactorily to him that the accusations preferred against us, of our being Thugs and Phansegars, were totally groundless. We then stated that we were possessed of an English pass, and that any attempt to detain us would be severely punished; but seeing that all our representations were of no avail, and that our guards were equally deaf to entreaties and threats, I became alarmed, and could think of no better method of securing my own life than by the confession of the truth, and the offer to disclose all that I knew, upon the promise of a pardon. This assurance being granted, and my mind being now at ease by its confirmation, I shall with the utmost readiness furnish a full account of all our proceedings.

"My father was a cultivator in Buraicha, which occupation I also followed, but joined the Thugs when I was about thirty years old, and have since continued to be more or less connected with them. Before the establishment of tranquillity, I served under a celebrated chief, Oodey Sing, at which time our excursions were neither carried to so great a distance as they have been since, nor were they so lucrative or certain; for, in those days, travellers, particularly if they possessed much property, seldom ventured to go from one place to another without being well escorted, and in large parties, and we feared the Pindarrees as much as others who were not of our profession. It was our custom to collect in bands of twenty or thirty, belonging to neighbouring villages, after the rainy season was over, and to proceed in different directions to distant countries in quest of plunder. Each band possessed a chief, who was invested with supreme authority, and to every man in the company was given an allotted part; some were employed as scouts, who, spreading themselves round, gave notice of the approach of passengers; others took the office of spies, and, lounging in the bazaars and *serais*, often persuaded unsuspecting persons to join our company, in which case their death was inevita-

ble. The duty of a third number consisted in seeking out convenient spots wherein to dig the graves of those who were marked out as our victims, a preparation invariably made before the commission of the murder; others were in readiness to convey the bodies to the places of interment; and thus, in an incredibly short time, the whole business was performed. A few of the most daring and expert were alone entrusted with the strangling, an art which, requiring long practice and peculiar dexterity, is never allowed to be self-assumed, but is conferred with due ceremony, after the fitness of the candidate, in point of firmness, bodily strength, and activity, has been ascertained. When properly qualified, the aspirant is conducted to the field by his *gooroo* (spiritual guide), who looks out anxiously for some favourable omen, such as the chirping of certain birds, or their flight past the right hand; when this occurs, he knots the *roomaul* (handkerchief) at each end, and delivers it to the candidate, imploring success upon his exertions. After this, they return and end the ceremony by a feast or a distribution of sweetmeats. The remainder of the band are employed variously in menial offices, cutting wood, looking after the bullocks and *tattoos*, &c. When a sufficient quantity of property

is collected, it is divided into shares and sent home under a proper escort to the different villages where we have our habitations. As appearances were often very fallacious, people who seemed poor affording frequently a richer booty than those possessed of baggage, it was our invariable practice to rob every person who fell in our way, and these depredations were in every instance preceded by murder. I cannot pretend to say how many travellers lost their lives by our hands during our last excursion, such things being of too common occurrence with people of our habits to make much impression upon me or any of my associates, who had been long familiar with them, or to excite us to inquire into the particular circumstances attending the acquisition of plunder by detached parties.

"I have never known, since I belonged to the Thugs, a single instance of robbery committed by them without the previous destruction of life, generally by strangulation. This is effected either by means of a *roomaul*, or shred of cloth well twisted and wetted, or merely by the hands, though the last is rarely practised, and only in the event of failure in the former and usual mode. On a preconcerted signal being given, the victim or victims are immediately overpowered, and the perpe-

tration is the business of a moment. In committing murder, it is a strict rule with the Thug to avoid shedding blood, as its traces would, in many cases, lead to detection. In the hurry, however, in which it is sometimes necessary to provide for the disposal of a more than ordinary number of bodies, the graves cannot be made large enough to contain them entire, in which case they are cut into pieces and closely packed. When buried by the road-side, or any other exposed place, it was our practice to kindle fires on the spot, in order to prevent the marks of the newly-turned earth from being too conspicuous. Murders in the manner I have described are accomplished with equal certainty and despatch, and with the same facility while the victims are walking along the roads, as when they have been enticed to our encampment and are sitting amongst us confident and secure, while we have every thing carefully and leisurely prepared for their destruction. These murders are frequently perpetrated contiguous to villages, from whence we have induced strangers, on their journey from distant parts, to take up their quarters in our company. They are usually performed before the twilight is completely over; and while the work is going on, a part of our band are singing and beat-

ing their tomtoms, in order to drown any noise the sufferers might make, and to give our whole camp the appearance of careless festivity: thus our victims are despatched with ease and security, even within call of assistance and almost in the face of a whole village.

"The different persons actually engaged commence their operations simultaneously, and by a signal given, which of course is preconcerted; but at the same time quite arbitrary, generally a common place expression not likely to excite attention, such as *tumba-koo low* (bring tobacco). The *roomaul*, or twisted shred, is the only implement used by the Thugs. I have never seen the noose made of cord, though I am aware of the general supposition that we are in the habit of employing such an instrument in the commission of our murders; but if it ever was adopted its use has been long abandoned, for this obvious reason, that if in any search so suspicious an article should have been found upon us, there would have been no difficulty in guessing our profession. In passing through a country, the large number of which our bands consist is sufficient in itself to excite inquiry, and we are always obliged to have some plausible tale or explanation ready, to remove any doubt

respecting the peaceableness of our characters and pursuits. Few carry arms; amid twenty or thirty persons there will not be above three swords, and we have emissaries at all the *kutcherries* of the different districts, who manage in various ways to screen us from detection when the murder of missing persons is suspected.

"I proceed now to give an account of the events that took place during our late excursion. We had journeyed several days without falling in with more than one traveller (the only class of persons against whom our designs were directed); but about the middle of the sixth stage, we came to a river, where we found four sepoys, who were proceeding to their homes on furlough, cooking their meal. When these men saw us approach, they seemed to entertain some suspicion, for they hurried over their repast, and hastened onwards to a village, whither our spies followed, and saw them fairly lodged, while we halted at some distance, and knowing the road they would take, a strong party was despatched next morning, who waylaid them and executed their purpose, though not without difficulty, for one of the sepoys, notwithstanding he was taken by surprise, raised his spear in his defence; but resistance proved vain, he was over-

powered by numbers and murdered with his companions. We found two thousand rupees upon their persons, and soon after the junction of our band, fell in with four *prasaharies* (strolling actors), who joined us, as we spoke kindly to them, and pretending a wish to see their performances, we promised them a rupee for our evening's entertainment. They fell into the snare, and, without waiting for the *tamasha* (shew), we took their lives and possessed ourselves of their property, amounting to forty rupees. Amongst their effects, there was a *meerding* (hand-drum), which we afterwards used as an accompaniment to our songs. The next day we met a body of fellow Phansegars, returning to Bundlecund with their booty; they were in pursuit of two men, who travelled with a loaded bullock, and invited us to accompany them and share the spoil, which we did, but got nothing but a brass pot and a few clothes. We were more fortunate in encountering two Brahmins, who were returning to their homes in Hindostan, and to whom we pretended that our business lay the same way, though in reality we retraced our steps for the purpose of effecting their destruction, which we accomplished in the usual manner, and were rewarded by a quantity of gold: they had also some

hoondees (drafts upon native bankers); but these we burned.

"At our next quarters, our spies became acquainted with a *soubadah* and two sepoys, his companions, and persuaded them to quit the lodging they had taken in the bazaar, and encamp with us outside the village, where we also enticed another traveller, and having strangled them all, we removed the bodies to the distance of a quarter of a mile for interment, as the *tope* (grove) where we halted seemed too much frequented for the purpose. This also proved a rich prize. We were obliged to follow the next traveller during four entire days, before we could find a convenient opportunity for the completion of our wishes, paying him the most profound attention the whole time, and insinuating ourselves into his favour by flattering courtesies. He was a rich man and well attended, which increased the difficulty of the enterprize; but we succeeded at last; and a few days afterwards, by the same specious pretences and deceitful words, persuaded four sepoys to sojourn with us for the night, and so made a good booty. We subsequently fell in with two travellers, a Moosulman and a Brahmin; the usual artifices were practised with success; they halted in our

company for the day, and were murdered before night. A *tattoo* laden with opium formed the most valuable portion of their effects; we carried the drug to the next town, and sold it for a hundred rupees, twenty-five of which we were obliged to give to the *cutwal* (police-officer) who managed the sale. We here found eighteen Phansegars of the Moosulmaun gang, who had been out for some time, but being dissatisfied with their acquisitions, agreed to join us.

"A report having been brought of four travellers having passed, heavily laden, though they were considerably a-head, it was deemed advisable to dispatch twenty-five of our stoutest men in pursuit. After a long fatiguing march, they overtook their prey, but to their great disappointment found nothing amid the baggage, which had promised plunder, but the common tools of stone-cutters, their owners being miserably poor, and in search of employment. We also at this time lost a capital booty, which seemed to be within our grasp. A party of horse-dealers joined our company; but they were fifteen in number, including attendants, and the difficulty of securely disposing of so many bodies in an open country, consumed so much of the night in consultation, that we considered it

advisable to forego our designs, and the same evening some petty thieves stole upon us and carried off every thing they could find. Three pedlars soon afterwards fell into our hands, but their wares, consisting of cornelians and other articles of trifling value, were not worth more than twenty rupees.

"The next day we overtook six palankeen-bearers returning from service, accompanied by two women and two children; these people at the end of the stage lodged themselves in an old temple in the village, which baffled our attempts for the time; but, as they proceeded freely with the party the next morning, we easily effected our purpose in a convenient jungle, the people a-head preparing the graves, which were necessarily very deep and wide, as there were ten bodies to inter. A few rupees, clothes, ornaments of trifling value, and their cooking utensils, alone repaid our time and trouble. Four other travellers shortly afterwards crossed our path: one of them had a cage with five *mynahs* (talking birds) in it, which he was bringing up from Bombay; they had also a *tattoo*, money, and clothes, all of which of course we possessed ourselves of.

"We were subsequently exceedingly alarmed by the attention we excited upon meeting a train of *hackeries*, escorted by sepoys, coming from Mhow; one of these guards remarked in our hearing that some persons of similar appearance had been apprehended near the English cantonment, and in consequence of this intimation we made our halting-place in a very retired spot. One of our spies, however, ventured into the bazaar of the neighbouring town, and while loitering there, a party of mounted travellers came in, and added to his fears by the scrutinizing glances which one of them cast upon him. After regarding him very attentively, he observed to his companions that the necklace he wore was the exact counterpart of one belonging to his brother. Our spy, in excessive apprehension of their recognition, expected to be instantly arrested, but finding that no immediate attempt was made to detain him, he took the earliest opportunity to slip away, and reporting what had passed, we all hastily departed, pushing forward for several miles before we thought it safe to halt.

"Our party, which was very large, then separated; the band to which I was attached moved to Pitlewred, and rested at a large stone-well outside

the town, near which we found a *mahajun* (merchant) and four attendants preparing their meal. The *mahajun*, from his respectable appearance, his dress and ornaments, became the object of our attention; but it seemed as if he did not like the looks of his neighbours, for, having hastily finished his repast, he and his servants set forward on their journey. Not daring at this time to follow, we suffered them to escape, but found afterwards that he had fallen in with one of our detached parties, and proved a rich prize. Proceeding towards Neemuch, we enticed four travellers to our camp, and though not far from the English cantonment, contrived to put them to death. A stage or two beyond, we despatched another foot passenger; and near the village of Sauganeer, we strangled four *bunniahs* (shop-keepers). Nothing further occurred until we arrived in Dehole, where, as I have already stated, we were arrested.

"I have now mentioned all the murders of which I was an eye-witness, except perhaps two or three not attended with any remarkable circumstance, which may have escaped my recollection."

A few words will furnish a sketch of the localities of the places where many of these sanguinary

along the plains of Mysore and the Carnatic. Those in the neighbourhood of Bangalore do not yield in magnificence to the most celebrated pagodas of the Peninsula, and they are the favourite resort of all who possess any taste for architectural beauty; while, to the less intellectual portion of the community, the music, dancing, the banquet, and perhaps above all the feats of jugglers, offer high gratification.

The Madras jugglers are famous all over the world; the exploits of Ramo Samee are still fresh in the recollection of the inhabitants of London; and though the exhibition of similar acts of dexterity is often more extraordinary than pleasing, the display of legerdemain in India would almost induce the belief that the age of necromancy had not passed away. A man who, in 1828, seated himself in the air without any apparent support, excited as much interest and curiosity as the automaton chess-player who astonished all Europe a few years ago; drawings were exhibited in all the Indian papers, and various conjectures formed respecting the secret of his art, but no very satisfactory discovery was made of the means by which he effected an apparent impossibility. The bodies of the Madras jugglers are so lithe and supple, as

to resemble those of serpents rather than men. An artist of this kind will place a ladder upright on the ground, and wind himself in and out through the rungs until he reaches the top, descending in the same manner, keeping the ladder, which has no support whatever, in a perpendicular position. Some of the most accomplished tumblers will spring over an enormous elephant, or five camels placed abreast; and in rope-dancing they are not to be outdone by any of the wonders of Sadler's Wells.

Swallowing the sword is a common operation, even by those who are not considered to be the most expert; and they have various other exploits with naked weapons of a most frightful nature. A woman,—for the females are quite equal to the men in these kind of feats,—will dip the point of a sword in some black pigment, the hilt is then fixed firmly in the ground, and after a few whirls in the air, the *artiste* takes off a portion of the pigment with her eye-lid. A sword and four daggers are placed in the ground, with their edges and points upwards, at such a distance from each other as to admit of a man's head between them; the operator then plants a scymetar firmly in the ground, sits down behind it, and at a bound throws himself

over the scymetar, pitching his head exactly in the centre between the daggers; and, turning over, clears them and the sword. Walking over the naked edges of sabres seems to be perfectly easy; and some of these people will stick a sword in the ground, and step upon the point in crossing over it. A more agreeable display of the lightness and activity, which would enable the performers to tread over flowers without bending them, is shewn upon a piece of thin linen cloth stretched out slightly in the hands of four persons, which is traversed without ruffling it, or forcing it from the grasp of the holders. The lifting of heavy weights with the eyelids is another very disgusting exhibition. Some of the optical deceptions are exceedingly curious, and inquirers are to this day puzzled to guess how plants and flowers can be instantaneously produced from seeds.

The Madras jugglers travel to all parts of India, but it is not often that the most celebrated are to be found at a distance from the theatre of their education. Snake-charmers are common every where; they belong to a peculiar caste of Hindoos, and, though their reputation is upon the wane, they still excite considerable curiosity in southern India. They pretend to be enabled to handle the

most venomous serpents with impunity, by means of the snake-stone, a smooth, flat substance, the size of a tamarind stone, and nearly the same shape: this is said to be extracted from the head of the animal; and though the fallacy of the idea of the concealment of a precious jewel in a serpent's head has been ably refuted by one of the contributors to the *Asiatic Researches*, the opinion still prevails that some of the stones vended by the cunning manufacturers are genuine.*

* In Major Moor's very pleasing volume of *Oriental Fragments*, are some details respecting snake-catching, snake-stones, and the tricks of the *sampooris*, or snake-catchers. He describes the process employed by one of these artists to charm a snake from his (the Major's) dwelling, and to extract the stone, apparently from the jaws of the reptile. He proceeds: "A clever Parsee servant had reminded us that we had lately lost many fowls, adding that he should not wonder if there was another *samp* somewhere near the fowl-house. Thither we went; and, after the usual ceremonials, sure enough another was caught. I smelt a rat; and, causing the exulting catcher to bring his writhing captive into the veranda, watched narrowly the lithotomic process. At the proper moment I, to the great astonishment of my friend Forbes and the other spectators, seized the snakeless hand of the operator; and there found, to his dismay, perdue in his well-closed palm, the intended-to-be-extracted stone.

"The fellow made a full and good-humoured confession of the trick, as touching the second snake and the concealed

high-way in the districts of Allahabad, Ghazeepore, and Juanpore, will be observed in the detail reports of the last year, said to have been perpetrated by persons assuming the garb of Byragees, who join travellers at *mhuts* (temples), and accompanying them upon the road, take an opportunity of mixing the seeds of the datura, or other narcotic plants, with the *hookah* or food of the travellers, and plunder them when killed or stupified by the dose. These murders are not, I apprehend, committed by the persons termed Thugs, as poisoning would appear the only means of destruction used by the robbers. At the same time, as they have prevailed for some years, particularly in the district of Juanpore, and the circumstances attending each case are nearly alike, there seems reason to believe that some association similar to that of the Thugs of the Dooab is established in Juanpore and its vicinity. Pilgrims proceeding to the west and north, to Gya or to Juggernaut, in Cuttack, take Benares in their way, and pass through the district of Juanpore in their route to Hurdwar, or to Muttra, and Bindrabund. The circumstance of various roads meeting in this district, combined with the facilities afforded for escape by the proximity of the country

of the Nawaub Vizier (now King of Oude), are probably amongst the causes why this offence is more prevalent in Juanpore than elsewhere.

"5th class.—Travellers have been frequently found murdered in that part of the country placed under the joint magistrate stationed at Ghazeepore. The bodies have commonly been found buried, and the same offence can be traced to the eastward through the district of Tirhoot.

In the detailed reports of the state of the police during the last year, in the jurisdiction of the first magistrate of Ghazeepore, a case will be found stated, in which it will appear from the magistrate's enquiries, that a fraternity of *Gosheins* (religious beggars) had long been established in that quarter, who were said to entice travellers to their *mhut*, particularly sepoys, and to murder them. It is not stated what means of destruction are used by these people, but in the examination taken before Mr. Cracroft, the zemindar would appear to be concerned with the Gosheins in these nefarious practices; and it is stated by a witness, that numbers of travellers have for a series of years been made away with in this quarter. The establishment of *chokies* on the high-way, and the employ-

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ment of the village watch in aid of these *chokies*, are in every respect the most certain and efficient arrangements which can be devised for the suppression of this crime.

END OF VOL. I.

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